

**EVIDENCE OF EXISTING KNOWLEDGE OF CHINA AND ITS
INFLUENCE ON EUROPEAN ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN THE
SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES**

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**EVIDENCE OF EXISTING KNOWLEDGE OF CHINA AND ITS
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SUMMARY

This dissertation investigates the extent of knowledge of China in Europe and, more particularly, Chinese influence on European art and architecture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What visual and literary resources on China and Chinese art in Europe were available in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries?
2. To what extent was there any understanding of Chinese art and architecture in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries?
3. To what extent might this understanding have affected European art and architecture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries?

Although European contacts with China began in the early sixteenth century, few scholars have touched on the evidence that exists of the extent of European knowledge of Chinese architecture before 1720, even on the possible impact of the Chinese architectural designs that were depicted on Chinese porcelains and other merchandise imported into Europe for two centuries before that date. This dissertation examines the evidence for the employment of new and differing aesthetics derived from Chinese artifacts and then assimilated in European art, architecture and landscape in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

After examining the variety of resources from which the new aesthetics derived from Chinese artifacts imported into Europe was evolved, the dissertation analyzes

Chinese influence in different nations in an order which follows the most consistently open and effective communications to the Far East.

In the process, the dissertation quotes the contemporary historical descriptions of those Chinese artifacts as well as attempting to identify their influence on European art and architecture, thus providing evidence that the interaction between China and Europe served as a subtle but active, generative force in European art throughout the period.

In sum, the thesis attempts to explore the European understanding of Chinese art in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and to examine the consequences of that influence as they were reflected in European art and architecture. It analyzes some of the most influential and related social, political, and religious aspects that acted as powerful stimuli, which in turn affected the growth of Chinese influence on European art, architecture and landscape.

This dissertation thus attempts to push back the significance of the Chinese influence on aspects of European artistic styles from the accepted date of the early eighteenth century to the seventeenth and even earlier sixteenth century.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet.

Rudyard Kipling

In our current era when globalization penetrates our daily life to such an extent that we get used to wearing clothes made in China, use digital cameras exported from Japan while drinking Starbucks coffee all over the world, it is natural for us to take exchanges among different nations for granted. Yet with respect to the history of art and architecture, it is still common to see the rigid assumptions of “East” and “West” as if there existed real entities of “East” and “West” and there were no connections between Asia and Europe in any near or remote past.

This dissertation is an attempt to search for the artistic links between Chinese and European civilizations during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It aims to investigate what visual and literary resources were available on China and Chinese art and Chinese influence on European art and architecture during that time. The first questions that come to mind are these: what did the terms “China” and “Europe” mean in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? Is it possible to continue without some analysis and defining of these terms?

Different names for China were used in different eras, (for instance, the Greek name for China was Seres and it was Cathay that Marco Polo eulogized in the thirteenth century), making it more difficult to discuss Chinese influence at a certain period. In particular, since the image of China in the eyes of Europe did not remain constant

during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, one faces more difficulty in attempting to disentangle myths from facts. The other aspect of the question that needs to be answered is how to define Europe. While it is tempting to assume that at least Europe, if not Asia, was a cultural entity, it is worth remembering that fluidity and heterogeneity were two key characteristics in sixteenth and seventeenth century European society.

First of all, in the context of this dissertation neither of the two terms is meant to be seen as a strictly geographic term. Furthermore, with regard to the artistic nature of the topic, the terms do not refer to any natural disposition or temperament of the inhabitants. As far as Europe is concerned, the discussion in this thesis is limited to Portugal, Germany, Italy, France and The Netherlands. Yet some modes and tastes transcended the boundaries of each of these nations and there were certain interactions among all these countries. As for the European knowledge of Chinese architecture, this thesis is not an attempt to list all the sources but rather to point out and discuss some of those likely to have been most influential. The main purpose is to demonstrate the extent to which there was an understanding of things Chinese and the extent to which this understanding affected European art and architecture. Also it should be noted that clear-cut definitions in the references to “China” “things Chinese” and “Chinese art” are difficult to establish, and the mixture of real understanding with fantasies of things Chinese, Japanese and Indian in Europe at that time accounted for some mislabeling in the documents that remain. But we have a fairly accurate idea of the imports from China. Rather than defining “China” and “things Chinese” as definitive terms, this dissertation focuses more on what China was believed to be through the eyes of

sixteenth and seventeenth century Europeans, and the specific ways in which Europe perceived, interpreted and reacted toward “China” and “Chinese art”.

With such clarifications in mind, we may begin our investigation of the problem of existing knowledge of China as well as Chinese influence on European art and architecture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

While many studies have been devoted to the influence of Chinese art on seventeenth and eighteenth century European culture, especially in the decorative arts, various problems remain unsolved within the domain of architecture. Discussions have focused almost exclusively either on Chinese garden follies or on the contribution of William Chambers -- the latter, in particular, after the mid-eighteenth century.¹ Few scholars have touched on the evidence that exists of the European knowledge of Chinese architecture before 1730, even fewer on the possible impact of the Chinese architecture that was depicted on Chinese porcelains and other merchandise imported into Europe centuries before that date. In addition, although many articles have examined the growing awareness of the new aesthetics inspired by Chinese art, known as *Chinoiserie*, few of them have further investigated how this new and differing aesthetic began to be employed in European art and architecture as early as the sixteenth century. Furthermore, since *Chinoiserie* is defined as a style based mainly on imagination, this concept can be a distraction, concentrating attention on the

¹ For William Chambers' books on Chinese design, refer to *Design of Chinese Buildings, Furniture, Dresses, Machines, and Utensils*, London, J. Haberkorn, 1757, and *A Dissertation on Oriental Gardening*, London : Printed by W. Griffin and T. Davies, 1772.

imaginative side of European fantasies of “Cathay” at the expense of the evidence for the many real Chinese artifacts that were available in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (through different routes that will be addressed later). It also overlooks what effect those artifacts had on contemporary artists, as well as how the process of discovery and dissemination of this new vocabulary took place. Far from creating from scratch without real examples to imitate, European contemporary artists were able to access many Chinese artifacts such as porcelain vases that were exported and displayed in royal palaces as well as middle-class bourgeois homes, in addition to travel accounts that gave fairly accurate descriptions of China with detailed illustrations. This dissertation is concerned with these.

Demonstrating that there was a variety of resources for an understanding of the new aesthetics derived from Chinese artifacts imported into Europe from the early sixteenth to the early eighteenth century, this thesis traces the historical descriptions of those Chinese resources and attempts to identify their influence on European art and architecture. Thus evidence is provided to demonstrate that the interaction between China and Europe has increasingly served as an active, generative force in European art. In the process, the thesis argues that the significance of the Chinese influence on European artistic styles should be pushed back from the widely accepted date of the early eighteenth century into the seventeenth and even the sixteenth centuries. Analyzed in the course of developing this argument is, first, the historical context, beginning with that following the “Great Discovery”; second, the roles of the East Indian companies of a variety of European countries and, third, the effect of the taste of the rising middle-class in Europe, which all account for the repertoire of European art and architecture

being enriched by Chinese influence in a period that was much earlier than has previously been acknowledged.

Composed of nine chapters, this dissertation examines the evolution of European art and architecture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through the acquisition, acceptance and accommodation of different sets of vocabulary, most notably Chinese. The second chapter conducts a literature review of the current scholarship with regard to the Chinese influence on European art and architecture, and highlights some of the most authoritative sources. In addition, it also covers the methodology this dissertation employs, with some discussion of the more innovative methods that differ from the contemporary scholarship. The third chapter introduces the general historical context of connections between Europe and China before the sixteenth century. The fourth to eighth chapters address the Chinese influence on European art and architecture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, by different nationalities, examined in an order that follows the most consistently open and effective communications. Specifically, the fourth chapter explores the commerce between Portugal and China and its impact on Portuguese art and architecture. The fifth chapter briefly traces the history of the Dutch East India Company in China, and its effects on Dutch art and architecture. The sixth chapter deals with the British understanding of Chinese art, which was facilitated by the English East Indian Company and the dissemination of travel accounts; it also examines the consequences of that influence as they were reflected in British art and architecture. The seventh chapter discusses the vogue for things Chinese led by the French royal court, which was in turn followed by elite artists; it analyzes the social, political, and religious aspects that acted as powerful

stimuli for that vogue and its resulting influences on French art and architecture. The eighth chapter examines the fashionable Chinese rooms in other European countries such as Germany, Austria and Denmark. The conclusion summarizes all the above evidence, emphasizing that the significance of the Chinese influence on European art and architecture has to be pushed back from the widely accepted date of the early eighteenth century to the seventeenth and even the sixteenth century.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Before examining the Chinese influence on European art and architecture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it is important to consider a literature review of the contemporary state of the art of existing scholarship on Chinese influenced work in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as available Chinese artifacts in contemporary European countries.

In general, scholarship in China so far seems to have focused mainly on the influence of European art and architecture on China, rather than vice versa. This seems to be due largely to the language barrier and the relative difficulty of going abroad to study first-hand evidence. To understand the influence in the opposite direction, we must turn to some instances of Western scholarship on the vogue for things Chinese in Europe, and the growing awareness of this new aesthetics introduced by Chinese art in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Overall, contemporary scholarship dwells more on the period from the middle and late eighteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century, when the Rococo style started to flourish in mainland Europe and William Chambers built his famous pagoda in Kew Gardens in England. But this scholarship tends to overlook the presence of many Chinese artifacts in Europe much earlier than this date, and the possibility that they played a part in changing the aesthetic taste of contemporary European patrons and artists prior to the mid-seventeenth century. Furthermore, although there is an emerging trend to acknowledge more evidence of Chinese influence on European art, its influence on architecture and its kinship with contemporary decorative arts is still largely unaddressed.

With regard to Chinoiserie, a French term adopted by the English referring to Chinese influenced work after 1684,² we must consider three scholars who addressed this subject from different perspectives; namely, Hugh Honour, Oliver Impey and Dawn Jacobson. It is noteworthy that although their texts contain discussions of Chinese influence on European art and architecture during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they either ignore the fact that there was evidence of fairly accurate travel documents on China and large numbers of real Chinese artifacts available in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, or they fail to address the possible interplay among different categories in art and architecture.

To start with, we turn to Hugh Honour's *Chinoiserie*, published in 1961, one of the most commonly accepted books, which provides a comprehensive review with useful bibliographical notes. *Chinoiserie* explores how the idealized vision of the Chinese Empire was developed in Europe from several perspectives (encompassing trade relations between Europe and the Far East) from the fourth century B.C., as well as some of the contemporary literary and philosophical accounts, mostly after the eighteenth century. Because Honour believes that few Chinese artifacts were available in Europe earlier than the late seventeenth century, he makes it clear that it is not his intention to examine Chinese artifacts in the sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe:

² *The Oxford Dictionary*. It is a modern French term, adopted into English, referring to Chinese-influenced work after 1684. *The Encyclopedia of World Art* confines its use to the 18th century (V. 307).

Paintings, pottery, and furniture made in China for the Chinese, and not for export, were rarely to be seen in Europe until comparatively recent times. Nor were accurate accounts of China available for the European reader until the early nineteenth century... Space, and my estimate of the reader's patience, has allowed me to describe and illustrate relatively few of the numerous delightful Chinoiserie objects produced in the late seventeenth and eighteenth century.³

By focusing on examining only the 'European vision of Cathay' (that is, the fantasy and imaginations of an exotic picture of the country), Honour leaves unaddressed some influential literary and visual accounts of Chinese artifacts in Europe earlier than the late seventeenth century.

This book is not concerned, save in passing, with China or with Chinese objects. The subject is *Chinoiserie*, which may be defined as the expression of the European vision of Cathay.⁴

Furthermore, when Honour mentions some important books such as John Nieuhoff's *An Embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces, to the Grand Tartar Cham, Emperor of China*, no images nor examples are presented to prove the claims -- such as the claim that Nieuhoff's descriptions of Chinese gardens and 'Artificial Hills' partially accounted for the genesis of the *jardin Anglo-Chinois*.

³ Hugh Honor, *Chinoiserie*, The Vision of Cathay, E. P. Dutton & Co., INC. New York, 1961, p. 2.

⁴ Ibid, pp. 7-8.

He [Nieuhoff] had, moreover, an eye for a garden. And if he sometimes yearned for the trim parterres and regimented tulips of his native land he was none the less susceptible to the sweet disorder and engaging wantonness of the Chinese pleasance. ‘There is not anything wherein the Chinese shew their Ingenuity more than in these rocks or Artificial Hills,’ he wrote,

‘which are so curiously wrought that Art seems to exceed Nature: These Cliffs are made of a sort of stone, and sometimes of Marble, and so rarely adorned with Trees and Flowers, that all that see them are surprised with admiration. Rich and wealthy people, especially the great Lords and *Mandorines*, have for the most part such Rocks in their Court and Palaces, upon which they squander good parts of their Estates... If I should relate of all the other Artificial Ornaments, as of Gardens, Wildernesses, Pools, and other particulars which adorn this [Imperial] Court, I should far exceed the bounds of what I intend, and perhaps to some of belief...’

In this Passage lies one of the seeds which was to germinate in Europe and eventually blossom into that most attractive hybrid, the *jardin Anglo-Chinois*.⁵

It is noteworthy that being one of the first scholars to explore this subject, Honour may not have had access to the sources of later authors. Therefore, he presents some of the historical facts without pointing out details of their origins, making it difficult for readers to dig deeper for supplemental information. For instance, when describing a wedding present to Princess Elizabeth of England in 1613 that was valued at £ 10,000, Honour does not complete the story with a specific source: “The growing

⁵ Ibid, pp. 20 -21.

vogue for Orientalia is also indicated by the steady increase in the prices charged for Chinese or Japanese objects. To quote an exceptional example, a ‘cabinet of China worke’ given as a wedding present in 1613 to Princess Elizabeth of England (the daughter of James I, known to historical novelists as the Queen of Hearts) was valued at £ 10,000.”⁶

One aspect that was ignored by Honour in his *Chinoiserie* is the existing Chinese artifacts in Portugal in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as how they were assimilated into Portuguese art and architecture:

Strangely enough, the only European countries which seem to have remained more or less immune to the influence of Orientalia in the first half of the seventeenth century were those most intimately connected with the China trade – Spain and Portugal.⁷

Another one of the most authoritative writers on the subject of Chinoiserie is the former director of the Oxford Ashmolean Museum, Oliver Impey, who believes that Chinoiserie is a style that began from imitation, and that blue-and-white porcelain played an important role: “There can be no doubt that it was the Chinese blue-and-white that played a major part in the foundation of that mixture of styles that we call Chinoiserie.”⁸

Including more detailed illustrations than Honour, Impey’s book *Chinoiserie* lacks thorough bibliographic notes and thus often leaves the reader wondering where

⁶ Ibid, pp. 43-44.

⁷ Hugh Honour, *Chinoiserie, The Vision of Cathay*, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. New York, 1961, p. 45.

⁸ Oliver Impey, *Chinoiserie, The Impact of Oriental Styles on Western Art and Decoration*, George Rainbird Ltd, London, 1977, p. 89.

the first-hand sources are. For instance, when discussing how the blue-and-white color scheme was intimately connected with Chinoiserie, Impey cites a fact without giving the reference:

Sir Osbert Sitwell tell us how his father, the eccentric Sir George, among his many garden works and follies ‘had determined to have all the white cows in the park stenciled with a blue Chinese pattern, but the animals were so obdurate and perverse as in the end to oblige him to abandon the scheme.’⁹

In addition, Oliver argues that the English landscape garden owes a debt to landscape paintings depicted on Chinese blue-and-white porcelain:

Then they [garden pavilions] were enthusiastically erected all over Europe, and I venture to suggest that the lesson of a garden building both beautiful (or at least pretty) and utilitarian was learned more from Chinese than from Claude, and here again, was probably learned from the landscape painted on blue-and-white porcelain, which almost invariably includes some sort of pavilion.¹⁰

In general, Impey divides his book into two parts: the first introduces the meeting of East and West with some of the relevant events, while the second categorizes visual art objects in terms of textiles, ceramics, painting, furniture and

⁹ Ibid, p. 89.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 141.

architecture. This method inevitably fails to address the possible interplay between these categories.

It is unfortunate that Impey does not illustrate some of the evidence in his book. When talking about tapestries in France and rugs in England, for example, Impey mentions a rare Chinoiserie carpet without presenting a visual image:

In France, in 1626, the Savonnerie factory began in the old soap-works at Chaillot, but made mostly baroque design carpets, not oriental. Nor were the short-lived English eighteenth-century factories of Fulham, Moorfields and Exeter involved in oriental style, and it would appear that by the beginning of the eighteenth century oriental rugs were imported in sufficient quantity for it to be uneconomic to imitate their designs in Europe. A rare Chinoiserie exception is the large Axminster carpet made for the Banqueting Hall of the Royal Pavilion at Brighton in the early years of the nineteenth century which has dragons in the design to correspond with great dragons on the chandeliers and ceiling.¹¹

Dawn Jacobson's book, also entitled *Chinoiserie*, is another well-recognized reference on the subject. Presenting a variety of visual examples in a chronological order, Jacobson argues that Chinoiserie is a style that is merely based on imagination without imitation:

To meet the growing demand for Eastern imports, inventive artists and craftsmen from all over Europe began to produce their own alternatives – Chinoiseries – which while

¹¹ Ibid, p. 69

evoking the products of China did not imitate them. Indeed the means for imitation were not at hand.¹²

Yet by focusing mainly on the European imaginations that were inspired by Chinese artifacts from the thirteenth century to the twentieth century, Jacobson leaves out some important evidence of existing Chinese artifacts and the knowledge of China during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as Chinese paintings sent back to Europe by Jesuits and Chinese porcelains collected in various cabinets of curiosities across European countries.

Other than the above-mentioned scholars and their influential books, some more recent scholarship on Chinoiserie dwells on either a particular decorative category – for example tapestry, in *Chinoiserie: European Tapestry and Needlework 1680 – 1780*,¹³ (2006) or one specific European country, such as Britain, in *Chinese Whispers: Chinoiserie in Britain 1650 – 1930*¹⁴ (2008).

On the other hand, “Chinoiserie and the exotic east” was also discussed in some books on the Rococo style because of the affinity between the two. For example, in *The Rococo Age* (1960), the authors argue that many ideas such as asymmetrical designs, Chinese bird’s-eye perspective and so on, served as the starting point for the vogue for things Chinese. They point out that aside from using the theme of Chinoiserie in

¹² Down Jacobson, *Chinoiserie*, Phaidon Press Ltd, London, 1993, p. 7.

¹³ Refer to *Chinoiserie: European Tapestry and Needlework 1680 – 1780*, Franses, New York, 2006.

¹⁴ Refer to *Chinese Whispers: Chinoiserie in Britain 1650 – 1930*, Edited by David Beevers, The Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove, 2008.

furniture and porcelain, the garden designs in England also demonstrated the universal Chinese fashion.¹⁵

This argument is echoed by a renowned scholar in Chinese art, G. F. Hudson, who remarks in his *Europe & China: A Survey of their Relations from the Earliest Times to 1800*, that aspects of Chinese decorative design helped to form the Rococo style:

Through imports into Europe of Chinese painted silks, porcelain, lacquer, screens and fans the principles of Chinese decorative design and the peculiar artistic vision of the Far East were made familiar in Europe and especially in France; thus Chinese influences helped to form the Rococo style, and make themselves felt in the work of two European painters of the first rank, namely Watteau and Cozens.¹⁶

Unlike other scholars who focus mainly on decorative art, Hudson ventures further to suggest the influence of Chinese art and architecture on European architecture and gardens:

The painted silks and embroideries, the porcelain, the lacquered cabinets and screens, which made the courtly society of Europe familiar with Chinese forms and principles of design, were at first imported not for their values as fine art so much as for the qualities of their material technique. The Chinese silk industry commanded a range of

¹⁵ Arno Schonberger and Halldor Soehner, *The Rococo Age*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc. New York, 1960, p. 86.

¹⁶ G. F. Hudson, *Europe & China: A Survey of their Relations from the Earliest Times to 1800*, London : E. Arnold & co., 1931, p. 25.

subtle effects which the European could not yet equal, while no hard-paste porcelain or satisfactory lacquer was produced in Europe before the eighteenth century. It was therefore the beauty of the materials themselves, specialities of China, that made the demand for Chinese imports; the forms of the decoration were regarded as merely quaint and curious, or even as detracting from the quality of the object. But in time both the forms and the world represented in painted scenes began to take hold on the imagination of European buyers; they bought acquaintance not only with the manner and atmosphere of Chinese painting, but also, through pictorial representation, with Chinese architecture and gardens.¹⁷

As with Hugh Honour, Hudson published his book in 1931 when he might not had access to many illustrations. Therefore, he does not provide much visual evidence to illustrate his otherwise sound claims.

The renowned art historian Rudolf Wittkower, however, backs up his arguments with some helpful illustrations. As quoted on page 56 of this dissertation, Wittkower points out that:

In the seventeenth century a completely new image of China began to develop. Whereas China had been a land of marvels and mystery throughout the Middle Ages, it now began to be regarded as a country in which unequal social, political, and religious wisdom and enlightenment reigned, and this view of China had important consequences for Europe.¹⁸

¹⁷Ibid, P. 274.

¹⁸ Rudolf Wittkower, 'China and Europe I: Early Connections', *Selected Lectures of Rudolf Wittkower, The Impact of Non-European Civilizations on the Art of the West*, compiled by Donald Martin Reynolds, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York, 1989, p. 158

With regard to the similarities between the Rococo style and Chinese art, Wittkower holds the same opinion, namely that there is a basic affinity between them:

Late Baroque Sinomania, which loomed large between 1660 and 1715, created a vast demand for original import ware. Displayed in porcelain cabinets and set in Baroque mounts, Chinese vases, jars, and plates appear in profusion on Baroque brackets symmetrically arranged and often contained by typically Louis XIV wall panels. A break with this taste came with the rise of the Rococo in the second decade of the eighteenth century and it is undeniable that the tenets of the style – such as asymmetry and delicacy of ornamentation and color – had a basic affinity to Chinese art.¹⁹

Furthermore, Wittkower is also an advocate of the view that attributes the English landscape garden to Chinese landscape painting. He argues that the engravings brought by Matteo Ripa from the Chinese Court to the Burlington circle contributed to the origin of the English landscape garden (as quoted in this dissertation on page 170): “This is significant because the copy reached Burlington at a decisive moment – when William Kent (his close collaborator) began to plan the first important semi-natural garden for Burlington’s Chiswick villa.”²⁰

¹⁹ Rudolf Wittkower, ‘China and Europe II: Chinoiserie and the Anglo-Chinese Garden’, *Selected Lectures of Rudolf Wittkower: The Impact of Non-European Civilizations on the Art of the West*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York, 1989, p. 162.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 189.

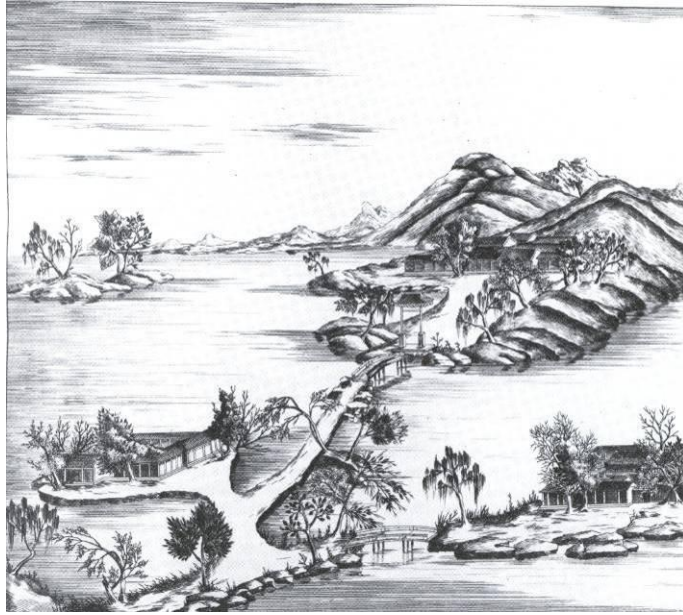


Fig. 2-1 The Imperial Gardens at Jehol, engraving by Matteo Ripa, 1713

Wittkower argues that Chinese landscape gardening was instrumental for the genesis of English landscape gardens, based on the parallel of Chinese civilization with that of the Roman. He believes that Chinese artifacts and landscape paintings not only inspired the British to change their design taste toward a more informal beauty, but also to visualize a civilization which set its citizens free by providing different approaches to nature:

Informal gardens had existed before, in two widely separate civilizations which, according to early eighteenth-century interpreters, were both governed by wise, just and temperate rulers for the benefit of the common people, namely republican Rome and China. It seems that in Burlington's circle these guides to a free man's relation to nature were as carefully explored as was possible in those days....

Although Kent's landscape garden sketches for Chiswick – of which some survive – are, of course, typically English, the Chinese testimony surely carried enormous weight. In Ripa's engravings there was visual proof of nature moulded by a society that had – one believed – realized Plato's utopia of a state ruled by philosophical principles. It appeared that republican Rome and China revealed the same truth. Both civilizations taught the same lesson regarding their approach to nature. And since Chinese gardens could now be studied, at least in prints, they implicitly testified to the character of Roman gardens, which could only tentatively be reconstructed from literary sources.²¹

(See pp. 171)

What differentiates Wittkower from other scholars is that he goes further, arguing that imported Chinese artifacts and paintings, along with increasingly available publications about China, enabled Europe to reach not merely a new set of aesthetic values but a new way of living. As quoted in this dissertation on page 188, Wittkower points out that the significance of imitating and drawing from China in art and architecture was to create a more Chinese sensibility towards life:

Now the West began to look to China for a new synthesis, in which even the old names got mixed up. But in fact history did not repeat itself, for in contrast to the Renaissance position the new trend was anti-Christian and far removed from Neoplatonic mysticism... Thus, this Sinophilia took on extraordinary proportions and far-reaching implications. One is inclined to conclude that, by re-creating China (or pseudo-China)

²¹ Rudolf Wittkower, *Palladio and English Pallasianism*, G. Braziller, New York, 1974, pp. 184 – 186.

in art and architecture, as well as in nature, people endeavored to establish the physical conditions for a Chinese way of life.²²

Similarly to Wittkower, the influential scholar Nikolaus Pevsner brings our attention to Temple's use of the term "Sharawadgi", to symbolize irregular beauty, as the first suggestion of a beauty fundamentally different from the formal aesthetic ideology:

It was left to the English, Temple first, and Shaftsbury, Addison and Pope later, to apply the doctrine of simple nature to the garden. Nature in her original state is not regular in the Le Notre sense, nobody could really insist on that, once it had been pointed out, and so Sir William Temple added that remarkable passage about Sharawadgi... Its significance in its own day was at least as great. It is the first suggestion of a possible beauty fundamentally different from the formal, a beauty of irregularity and fancy.²³

On the other hand, there are prominent scholars who refuse to admit that Chinese objects were instrumental, or at least helpful, in developing the Rococo style. An example is Fiske Kimball, a leading authority on the Rococo style. Limiting his references to European classical masterpieces, Kimball argues that Chinese influence on rococo style was minor:

²² Rudolf Wittkower, 'China and Europe I: Early Connections', *Selected Lectures of Rudolf Wittkower The Impact of Non-European Civilizations on the Art of the West*, Cambridge Press, 1989, Cambridge and New York, pp. 159-160.

²³ Nikolaus Pevsner, 'The Genesis of the Picturesque', *Architectural Review*, 1944, p. 140.

The pioneers in the new creation – Berain, Lepautre, Vasse, Audran – were purely French in blood, in training, and in tendency. Not one of them had studied in Italy. Italian elements, still surviving from earlier years, were secondary in their work; Italian influence was no vital factor in the new art they created. It is an art essentially French also in its grace, its gaiety and its gentleness, one of the most delightful flowerings of artistic creative genius.²⁴

We are led to the opinion that genetically Chinese influence was a minor and secondary factor. At most it may have encouraged the vogue of asymmetry, the impulse to which was already presented in European ornament, in the treatment both of the cartouche and of the trophy.

The French was very late, as compared with the Portuguese, Spanish, English and Dutch, in entering the China trade and in taking up Chinese motives of decoration.

...

We have seen that, in spite of such examples of Chinese workmanship and of Chinese influence in the details in decoration, there was no instance of asymmetry in the outlines of paneling at this period – indeed there was none before 1730, when it appeared under quite different circumstances.²⁵

²⁴ Fiske Kimball, *The Creation of the Rococo*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, 1943, p. 111.

²⁵ Ibid, pp. 138 - 139.

Kimball's argument is not in alignment with Joseph Needham, one of the most influential scholars of the Chinese influence on European art, science and civilization: "Both wallpaper historians and Sinologists agree that the so-called 'flock paper' made by a French printer in Rouen in 1630 and by the English at about the same time, was inspired by colored papers imported from China."²⁶

Michael Sullivan, another leading scholar on the exchange of Asian and European art, differs from Fiske Kimball on the Chinese influence on the Rococo style although he agrees that the interest in Chinese objects had a limited influence: "The vogue for things Chinese, or pseudo-Chinese, that swept Europe is obviously discernable only in the minor and decorative arts, in the arabesques and *singeries* of Huet and Pillement, in the exotic furniture, textiles and wallpapers that figure so largely in the Rococo style."²⁷

Based on contemporary scholarship, this dissertation aims to provide better first-hand evidence of the Chinese artifacts and architecture that were depicted on contemporary European artworks, and to trace the employment of such motifs in the works of some of the most influential artists such as Jean Berain and his student Daniel Marot. In addition, this dissertation examines the available resources to identify the transferring of ideas and influences from China between literature, art, architecture and landscape design, and thus demonstrate the fluidity between two-dimensional and three-

²⁶ Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1954, Vol. V, pp. 116 – 118.

²⁷ Michael Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art*, University of California Press, California, 1989, p. 104.

dimensional art forms at that time, which ended in the assimilation of a new set of vocabulary from the Chinese.

One of the challenges of this dissertation is to find first-hand evidence. One problem, for instance, is that many buildings were unfortunately destroyed in the 1755 Lisbon earthquake, making it difficult to find much evidence (that almost certainly existed) of the Chinese influence on Portuguese art and architecture in Lisbon. Fortunately a range of Chinese porcelains is now collected in many Portuguese museums, enabling us to answer these questions at least partially. In addition, recent excavations in Portugal also contribute greatly to the understanding of the taste of the Portuguese at that time. With the help of local residents, I was able to find some surviving buildings with blue-and-white tiles used as interior designs. This is discussed further in Chapter IV. Similarly, I went to other European, American and Chinese museums to collect the available evidence. Therefore many of the photographs in the following chapters are taken directly by the author from museums such as the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; Museum of Anastacio Goncalves, Lisbon; the Getty Museum, Los Angeles; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Museum Guiment, Paris; and Shanghai Museum, China. Some important contemporary literature and visual sources were found in libraries including the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris and the Vatican Library, Vatican.

Specifically, the aims of collecting and presenting the evidence of European assimilation of the new vocabulary from Chinese in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries:

- To identify the understanding, illustration and presentation of China and of Chinese art and architecture in European literature, including examples from contemporary journals, books and diaries.
- To present examples of the extent to which contemporary sixteenth to seventeenth century Chinese artifacts existed and have survived in Europe, which seems to have been particularly evidenced in the emerging bourgeois middle-class.
- To collect evidence of the imitation of Chinese artifacts and images in the visual arts including delftware, wallpapers, textiles, furniture, and silverware along with the transformation of two-dimensional images from the illustrations in plates and books to other means (i.e. silverware).
- To examine the effects on aristocratic taste, especially with regard to interior design, from the Chinese use of lighter colors (i.e. blue-and-white), light from the outside, natural motifs (flower and birds), and the growing preference for flowing curvilinear forms and lines.
- To identify the early advocates of the Chinoiserie style, including institutions/organizations (e.g. missionaries), patrons (e.g. ambassadors), travelers, scholars and artists (i.e. Daniel Marot, William Temple and Watteau).
- To list other important people, organizations & techniques that were instrumental in making the above possible (such as The East-Indian Companies in Portugal, Holland and Britain.)

One special endeavor I attempted in this dissertation is to represent evidences of the combination of Chinese decorative themes with European arms or other typical motifs to show how the European vocabulary gradually expanded. In the case of Chinese influence on Portuguese art and architecture, I analyze an example in detail on page 89. If we examine porcelains that were widespread in Portugal and other European countries, we notice the tendency to blend Chinese decorative motifs such as vignettes of Chinese landscapes with European Royal families' arms or religious emblems.



Fig. 2-2 Porcelain with four sides and two scenes that are linked to the mystery of the Redemption, showing elements from the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ, c. 1620.

The dimension of contemporary literature is added, supported by the evidence of contemporary paintings, to demonstrate the extent to which Chinese artifacts were integrated in Europeans' daily lives. In addition, the formation of museums or "Cabinets of Curiosity" is discussed briefly to explain why and how Chinese artifacts were used to represent a more complete understanding of the "universe" at that time.

The investigation into recent excavations is another method that I use in carrying out my research. For instance, as fig. 2-3 illustrates (see pp. 83-4): "If we examine the recent Santa Clara-a-Velha excavation in Portugal, the near 5,000 fragments of Chinese porcelain found in the excavation reveal a clearer picture."

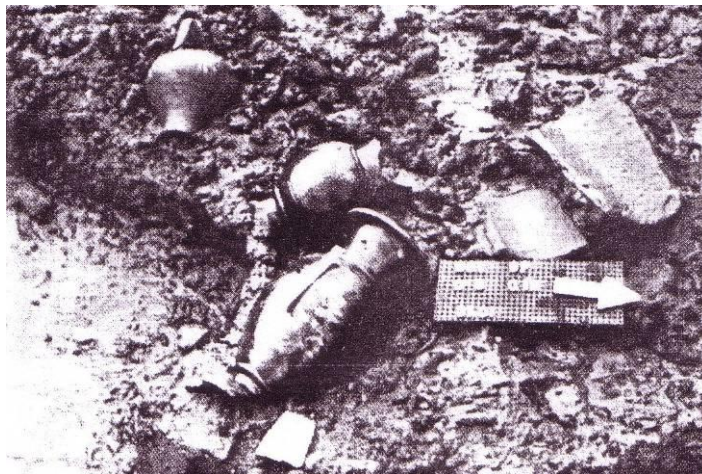


Fig. 2-3 Ceramic artifacts found in Santa Clara-a-Velha, Portugal

This dissertation also investigates some important books such as John Stalker and George Parker's *Treatise on Japanning and Varnishing* and interprets them in a new light. By providing examples of contemporary furniture that were inspired or borrowed directly from the images in these books, this dissertation illustrates the direct influence that such books had on sixteenth and seventeenth century European designers.



Fig. 2-4 Cabinet on stand, c. 1690, English, softwood, jappanned, with polished brass hinges and lockplate, Athelhampton, Sir Robert Cooke.



Fig. 2-5 John Stalker and George Parker, engraving in *A Treatise on Japanning and Varnishing*, 1688, London.

Furthermore, this dissertation examines the representations of Chinese architecture, such as the Porcelain Pavilion, which at the time were made in much smaller size, or simply used as decorative elements in the weaving of tapestry.



Fig. 2-6 Arnoldus Montanus, *Atlas Chinensis*, 1671, engraving.

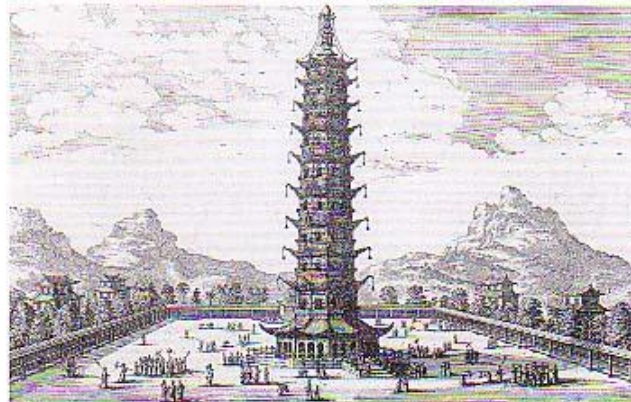


Fig. 2-7 The Porcelain Pagoda, Nanking. Illustrated and described in Nieuhoff's *Travels*, engraving, 1665.

The following analysis of the relationship between engravings and wallpaper decorations originates here, and thus far I have not seen any documentation about this

linkage elsewhere. On pages 117 and 118 I point out that, as figure 2-8 and 2-9 suggest, the wall hanging in Munich produced in 1700 (now decorating the “Chinese Cabinet” in the Munich Residence, the fourteenth century building constructed by the Wittelsbach family) is a combination of Nieuhoff’s Nanking Pagoda and Montanus’ Chinese temple.



Fig. 2-8 Wall hangings, made in Europe around 1700, used between 1868 & 1944 to decorate a “Chinese cabinet” in the Munich Residence, tapestry.



Fig. 2-9 Wall hangings, made in Europe around 1700, used between 1868 & 1944 to decorate a “Chinese cabinet” in the Munich Residence, tapestry.

Last but not least, this dissertation establishes some influential individuals and places in a context to represent a live world of real people whose collections reflect their social status and their sense of home. The interior design and display of Chinese artifacts in Burghley House, for example, was influential because of the historical context: “The English country house was, and is, the background of political life, for agriculture and sport (those twin passions of the English squire), for the social round of country balls and family gatherings, and, above all, for collecting.”²⁸

²⁸ *The Treasure Houses of Britain*, edited by Gervase Jackson-Stops, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1985, P. 10, J. Carter Brown, Director of National Gallery of Art, “Introduction”.

As will be mentioned later, Athanasius Kircher was the author of *China Illustrata*. To better understand the man and his influence, the historical context is elaborated below:

As a reminder that not all scholarly cabinets – whatever their setting and however erudite their founders might be – were marked by monastic sobriety, no more eloquent illustration could be found than the museum established by the German polymath Athanasius Kircher (1602-80) at the College of the Society of Jesus in Rome. Building on a rather modest collection left to the College by Alfonso Donino, Kircher expanded the museum with foreign rarities sent back to Rome by missionary priests and by much scientific apparatus stemming from his own researches.²⁹

²⁹ Arthur MacGregor, *Curiosity and Enlightenment Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, p. 21.

CHAPTER III: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE EARLY CONNECTIONS BETWEEN CHINA AND EUROPE BEFORE THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

3.1 Early Interactions between China and Europe to the T'ang Dynasty (A. D. 618 – 907)

Interactions between China and Europe began in the pre-Christian era, when the establishment of the Silk Road made the silk trade possible; there is evidence that this had been established by the age of Augustus (63 BC- AD 14). From the beginning of the Christian era onward, various kinds of Chinese goods reached Europe, primarily through the Byzantine Empire. During the T'ang Dynasty the relationships between China and Europe became closer.³⁰

Due to a lack of surviving evidence, the earliest connections between China and Europe are still somewhat mysterious. For one thing, regarding the original name of China, historians vary in their explanations and there is no commonly accepted opinion as to the time of the first usage of any term for China; this, together with evidence that a variety of names had been used in Europe to refer to China before the sixteenth century, has complicated the identification of the earliest links between China and Europe.

³⁰ For more references on the Silk Road see Irene Franck and David Brownstown, *The Silk Road: A History*, New York: Facts on File Publications, 1986; Luce Boulnois, *Silk Road: Monks, Warriors & Merchants on the Silk Road*, Odyssey ; Leicester : Cordee, Hongkong, 2003; & *The Silk Road Trade, Travel, War and Faith*, Edited by Susan Whitfield with Ursula Sims-Williams, Serindia Publications Inc., Chicago, 2004.

With regard to the original name of China and the time of the first usage of that name, three theories are currently most influential. Based on his finding of records concerning China in the *Arthashastra*, a treatise on statecraft written by Kautiliya, a minister of the Indian King Candragupta (who seized power between B.C. 320 and 315), Professor Hermann Jacobi believes that the name of China came at least from the fourth century B. C. He points out that:

The name *Cina* is secured as a designation for China in B. C. 300, so that the derivation of the word China from the dynasty of the Ts'in (B. C. 247) is definitely exploded. On the other hand, this notice is of interest also as proving the export of Chinese silk into India in the fourth century B.C.³¹

Nevertheless, many scholars believe that *Seres*, instead of *Ts'in*, was most probably the original name of China, a term that in the West identified with the name of the silkworm and the products made from it, and that this association continued until the name was replaced completely as a geographical expression.³²

The traditional etymology of the name of China, however, still regards the derivation of the word China from the dynasty of the Ts'in (flourished B.C. 255 – 207, also named 秦朝 in Chinese). This would mean that the connection between China and Europe was not recorded until B. C. 255. Primarily known as *Chin*, sometimes as *Sin*,

³¹ Hermann Jacobi, Kultur-, Sprache- und Literatur historisches aus dem Kautiliya, Sitz. K. Preuss, Akad. d. Wissensch, Berlin, 1911, xliv, p. 961.

³² Sir Henry Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, Kraus Reprint Limited, Nendeln, Liechtenstein, 1967, Vol. I, p. 20. For ancient Roman descriptions on the East, see *Xi La La Ding Zuo Jia Yuan Dong Gu Wen Xian Ji Lu*, translated by Di Sheng, Zhong Hua Shu Ju, Shanghai, 1987.

Sinae or *Thinae*, the term was connected with the trade and geography of the Far East, indicating an early knowledge of China by foreign countries. It is believed the final “a” was added later by the Portuguese.³³

Apart from these assorted names, there were several instances of the use of other countries’ names to signify China, depending on the context. For instance, Sir Henry Yule argues that in Smith’s *Dictionary of the Bible*, the Sinim of the prophet Isaiah, a name used to indicate the people of some nation of the extreme east or south, should be truly interpreted as indicating the Chinese.³⁴

Although the difficulty of identifying the original name of China and the time of the first usage of that name adds uncertainty to our knowledge of ancient communications between China and Europe, we are still able to get a glimpse of Roman knowledge about China by comparing translations of certain classical descriptions from both Roman authors and Chinese annals.

Based on these historical documents, we now know that the connections between China and Europe originated along with the establishment of the Roman Empire in the West and the Han Dynasty in China. Around B.C. 170 a tribe known in Chinese annals as the Yueh Chih, and later to the Greeks as Indo-Scythians, a people probably of Indo-European origin, left their home in China in what is now the province of Kansu and moved westward. Within a little more than two centuries they had conquered the eastern provinces of what had been Alexander’s empire, and had shown

³³ F. Hirth, *China and the Roman Orient*, Ares Publishers Inc., Chicago, 1885, p.4.

³⁴ Sir Henry Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, Kraus Reprint Limited, Nendeln, Liechtenstein, 1967, Vol. I, p. 10.

an ability to absorb diverse elements of culture by striking coins in the Greek style, creating figures of the gods of Greece, Persia, Egypt, and India, and even drawing portraits of Augustus Caesar and the Buddha. The Chinese conquest of Eastern Turkestan came in the wake of Chang Ch'ien, an emissary of the Chinese emperor, and this opened up the pathway across the Indo-Scythian kingdom to the Roman Orient. With this conquest came an enlarged silk trade. Armies, ambassadors and caravans were sent frequently to the West, with one Chinese embassy in the year A.D. 97 reaching as far as the Persian Gulf. The first recorded travelers from Rome to China came by sea as far as Tongking in the year A. D. 166, and were led from there overland to the Chinese capital, Lo-yang (洛阳). They are known in the Chinese annals as envoys from the Emperor An Tun, who has been identified as Marcus Aurelius Antonius.³⁵

An instance of diplomatic communication between Rome and China is recorded among the envoys of all countries who came to the court of Augustus:

Even the rest of the nations of the world which were not subject to the imperial sway were sensible of its grandeur, and looked with reverence to the Roman people, the great conqueror of nations. Thus even Scythians and Sarmatians sent envoys to seek the friendship of Rome. Nay the Seres came likewise, and the Indians who dwelt beneath the vertical sun...³⁶ (translated from Latin by Sir Henry Yule)

³⁵ For additional details, and translations of the Chinese sources on which these statements are based, see F. Hirth, *China and the Roman Orient*, Publishers Inc., Chicago, 1975, pp. 137 – 171.

³⁶ Florus, *Epitome of Roman History*, translated by E.S. Foster, Loeb Classical Library, No. 231, 1984, iv. 12.

A renowned scholar of Chinese art, G. F. Hudson, remarks that for Rome the trade in silk and the trade with China were practically identical. He even traces the debut of Western knowledge of China to the sixth or the seventh century B. C.:

It is generally held that the earliest references to China in European literature occur just before the beginning of the Christian era, after the opening of the silk trade over the Pamirs in the first century B.C. But there is reason to believe that a definite knowledge of China, obtained by way of a trade-route across Central Asia, was an ingredient in the Arimaspea of Aristaeus of Proconnesus, dating from either the sixth or the seventh century B.C.¹⁰

While it is difficult to prove whether or not Western knowledge of China can be traced as far back as Hudson argues, we can be sure that by B. C. 100 the influence of China had spread across Tibet and into Western Turkestan. By that time trade between China and Persia was taking place largely through camel caravans. According to Chinese scholar Chang Kwang-Chih, regular commerce in Chinese silk may be traced to the embassy of Zhang Qian, when the Han emperor Wu (B. C. 141 – B.C. 87) sent Zhang to seek allies in Central Asia for an imminent war.¹¹ Although Zhang failed to attract foreign support, the mission helped China learn about the goods produced in Central Asia and vice versa. “The Central Asians, and later the Persians and even the

¹⁰ G. F. Hudson, *Europe & China, A Survey of their Relation from the Earliest times to 1800*, London, Edward Arnold & Co., 1931, p. 27.

¹¹ For earlier references to silk and silk trade, see Irene Franck and David Brownstown, *The Silk Road: A History*, New York: Facts on File Publications, 1986; Luce Boulnois, *Silk Road: Monks, Warriors & Merchants on the Silk Road*, Odyssey; Leicester: Cordee, Hongkong, 2003; and *The Silk Road Trade, Travel, War and Faith*, Edited by Susan Whitfield with Ursula Sims-Williams, Serindia publications Inc., Chicago, 2004.

Roman Empire, became familiar with Chinese products, especially silk; this eventually gave rise to the development of the Silk Roads.”¹²

When was the first silk imported from China to the Roman Empire, and how? Was it by a sea route or through Chinese envoys, or even Persian merchants? Further research needs to be done in the hope of finding more exact answers. What is certain is that regardless of their rulers, European elites loved to clothe themselves in silk and that China had that very product to sell for high profits. With the development of the Silk Road, cities along the route continued to grow.

Turfan and Capernaum, cities at the two extremes, which once flourished merely by being near the great trade route, today are only ruins. Yet it is worth remembering that the Silk Road once served as an important means for cultural exchange between China and Europe. As Thomas Francis Carter puts it:

There was a day when the whole road lay through the lands of prosperous peoples who gathered together the elements of culture from all the East and all the West, an eclectic and cosmopolitan culture that has been buried and preserved wherever the route lay across what is now desert, especially in Chinese Turkestan.³⁷

Silk is certainly the most celebrated product that reached Rome from China, but throughout the long period from Roman times down through the Middle Ages there was

¹² James C. Y. Watt, Anne E. Wardwell, *When Silk was Gold*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1998, p. 7.

³⁷ Thomas Francis Carter, *The Invention of Printing in China and its spread Westward*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1925, p. 89.

a steady give and take between China and Europe. Berhold Laufer traces the history of some twenty-four agricultural products other than Chinese goods, the knowledge of which was carried westward from China to Persia or beyond from the Christian Era down to Mongol times, and sixty-eight that were carried in the opposite direction.³⁸

3.2 From the T'ang Dynasty (A. D. 618 – 907) to the Fourteenth Century (Yuan Dynasty)

3.2.1 The T'ang Dynasty

The relationship between China and Europe became closer in the seventh century, with the advent of the T'ang dynasty (A. D. 618 – 907). Until this point, the trade and communication between China and Europe had been of an occasional nature.

The T'ang Dynasty, which lasted almost 300 years, is probably the most well-known dynasty in Chinese history. Successively witnessing three zeniths during the dynasty, namely the "Prosperity of Zhenguan," the reign of Empress Wo Chao and the "Heyday of Kaiyuan," the Tang Empire became the largest, richest, and the most sophisticated state in the world at that time.³⁸ Neighboring countries sought contact and trade with the T'ang Empire and this made Chang'an, a city which possessed one million inhabitants, including people from other countries, the center of cultural

³⁸ Refer to Berhold Laufer, *Sino-Iranica; Chinese contributions to the history of civilization in ancient Iran with special reference to the history of cultivated plants and products*, The Blackstone Expedition, Chicago, 1919, Vol. XV, No. 3, in which book Berhold listed many goods that were exchanged between China and Iran such as the grape vine attributed by the Chinese to the Arabs and Iranian minerals, metals and precious stones in China.

³⁸ Jane Gaston Mahler, *The Westerners Among the Figurines of the T'ang Dynasty of China*, Roma Istituto Italiano Per Il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1959, pp. 3-4.

exchange between China and the West. Other than Chang'an, Dunhuang served as the westernmost fort of the early T'ang Dynasty and was not only an important trading post situated on the "Silk Road" but also the military headquarters for operations in the Western Regions. Foreign merchants and monks from the West as well as officials and soldiers from China brought their own goods and belongings to Dunhuang and made the trading center a cultural melting pot.³⁹

Thanks to its opening to foreign countries, T'ang China vigorously assimilated foreign ideas and developed trade with neighboring countries as well as Central Asia. While foreign music and dances enriched the T'ang culture, the Chinese philosophy of Confucius and the administrative system it created profoundly influenced Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese cultures. In fact, the excellence of T'ang civilization was well-known throughout Asia, Europe and Africa. Each in turn sent envoys and merchants to trade with the T'ang. As a result, the T'ang was trading with more than seventy countries. It was in this context that Arab commerce with China increased steadily. Throughout the Middle Ages Europe bought its supply of silk from the Arabs until finally the Crusades introduced an even more extensive use of silk to Western Europe, as seen in Italy in the thirteenth century and France in the fourteenth.⁴⁰ It goes without saying that along with the importation of silks and other Chinese artifacts, patterns and motifs depicted on them were introduced to Europe as well. Thus it is not

³⁹ Refer to *The Silk Road Trade, Travel, War and Faith*, Edited by Susan Whitfield with Ursula Sims-Williams, Serindia Publications Inc., Chicago, 2004.

⁴⁰ Mark Edward Lewis, *China's Cosmopolitan Empire the Tang Dynasty*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England, 2009, pp. 145-178.

surprising to see that Chinese phoenixes, peacocks, and dragons appear in Byzantium at an early period. (Fig. 3-1)



Fig. 3-1 Ivory casket, Byzantine. Tenth Century. The Cathedral Treasury, Troyes. Detail of two ends 14 * 13 cm.
[D. Talbot Rice 9ed., *Masterpieces of Byzantine Art* (Exhibition catalogue), London, p.51 with full bibliography]

The manufacturing of paper also spread from China to Europe through the Arabs. It is recorded that in July 751, paper manufacture from China entered the Arabic world, in which it would ultimately extend from Samarkand to Spain. The circumstances of this development are related in detail in the Arabic annals, which tell of a war between two Turkish chiefs, one of whom appealed for help to China, the other to the Arabs. The Arabs defeated the Chinese army and drove it back as far as the Chinese frontier. Among the prisoners taken were various paper makers, who then taught the art of paper making at Samarkand.⁴¹

⁴¹ A. F. R. Hoernle, "Who was the Inventor of Rag Paper?" *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, 1903, p. 663.

Aside from the introduction of new artistic motifs carried by Chinese silks and techniques of making paper, the compass is believed to be another item brought to Europe from China. It is recorded that the Chinese had known the properties of the lode-stone since before the Christian era, and during the first millennium of the Christian era there are many curious stories, the interpretation of which is still obscure, with regard to the construction of “south-pointing chariots.” The earliest clear mention in Chinese literature (or any literature) of a magnetic needle is by Shen Kua (1030 – 1093), the same man who first described movable type printing. The first mention in Chinese literature of the use of the compass for navigation is a little after 1100 but refers to the period from 1086 to 1099.⁴²

3.2.2 The Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368 A. D.) and the West

After the fall of the T'ang Dynasty, China entered into a period of disunion that lasted from 907 to 960 AD, and then a new dynasty, the Sung, partially reunified the country and managed to rule a large area for 170 years. Then for another 150 years the Sung ruled in the south in the period known as the Southern Sung (1127-1279). But the southern empire fell to the same forces that swept over northern China in the thirteenth century: the Mongols. Since this was not a time of power or stability, direct contacts between China and Europe were largely insignificant.

⁴² Thomas Francis Carter, *The Invention of Printing in China and its Spread Westward*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1925, pp. 92 – 93.

A change took place in the Yuan Dynasty, when non-native rulers, the Mongols, controlled all of China for the first time. Whereas the Sung Dynasty emperors had imposed controls on state trade, Mongol rulers favored trade in all their dominions. They eliminated the pre-existing controls so that internal and external trade was able to reach unprecedented proportions. While silk continued to be the most important Chinese export commodity and reached the Middle East and even Europe via the caravan routes across Asia, Chinese ceramics were also exported, chiefly into the Islamic countries.⁴³ In addition, as chronicled by Thomas Francis Carter in his *The Invention of Printing in China and its Spread Westward*, the crucial technology of the printing press spread filtered into the West. It was a period of remarkable contact and interchange between China and Europe.

For a century or more – the middle of the thirteenth century to the middle of the fourteenth – the contact between Europe and the Far East was far closer than ever before, and probably closer than at any subsequent period down nearly to the nineteenth century. Cathay to travelers from the West was the land of marvels, of wealth and of intellectual culture – a land to be looked up to. For one century and one century only the way was wide open. With the fall of the Mongols the curtain fell, only to be raised a century and half later, after Europe had passed through the Renaissance.⁴⁴

⁴³ More refer to James C. Y. Watt, Anne E. Wardwell, *When Silk was Gold*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1998, p. 7 and David Howard and John Ayers, *China for the West, Chinese Porcelain & Other Decorative Arts for Export Illustrated from the Mottahedeh Collection*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London and New York, 1978

⁴⁴ Thomas Francis Carter, *The Invention of Printing in China and its Spread Westward*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1925, p. 116.

Rudolf Wittkower echoes the above statement with more evidence:

Europe established contacts with the Mongol rulers almost immediately. In 1245, Pope Innocent IV sent the Franciscan John del Piano di Carpino as envoy to the court of the Grand Khan. In 1253, William of Rubruck followed him as envoy of Louis IX of France. The brothers Nicolo and Maffeo Polo left Venice in 1255 and spent fourteen years in Asia. On a second journey (on which they set out in 1271), they were accompanied by Nicolo's son Marco, who traveled extensively in East Asia until 1295. Although the report of his journey has rightly always been regarded as the most interesting of all travelers' accounts, there were many others who have left fascinating records of their experiences, such as John of Monte Corvino, the founder of the Latin Church in China, who stayed there from 1293 until his death in 1328; Andrew of Perugia, who was engaged in missionary work in Peking between approximately 1308 and 1318; Friar Oderic, who spent six years (from 1322 to 1328) in northern China; John of Marignola, who was in China between 1342 and 1353; and finally, Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, the agent of the Florence House of Bardi, who wrote (in about 1340) a kind of merchant's manual concerning the trade with the East...¹⁴

As Wittkower points out, John of Piano Carpino was sent by Pope Innocent IV in March 1245, on an embassy to the court of the Grand Khan. He was told to go via Prague and Kiev to Mongolia, where he presented his letter and received his reply. This

¹⁴ "China and Europe I" Early Connections", *Selected Lectures of Rudolf Wittkower, The Impact of Non-European civilizations on the Art of the West*, compiled by Donald Martin Reynolds, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1989, p. 146.

reply – the original – was discovered in 1920 in the archives of the Vatican.⁴⁵ It is written in Uigur and Persian and contains in lieu of a signature the seal of the Grand Khan Kouyouk (grandson of Jinghis). This is the first recorded appearance in Europe of an impression from a seal based on those in use in China and impressed with ink upon paper.⁴⁶

Travel accounts and word of mouth, as mentioned above, played an important role in generating the European knowledge of China. Marco Polo's writings and those of his contemporaries created the impression of a wealthy China in European minds, which partially accounted for the activity of Columbus and his successors' in the search for the North-west Passage to Cathay more than a century later. Other than the descriptions of exotic culture in China, Marco Polo introduced a vision of the highly ornamented Chinese palace into Europe:

It now remains to speak of a very fine palace that was formerly the residence of King Facfur, whose ancestors enclosed with high walls an extent of ground ten miles in compass, and divided it into three parts. That in the center was entered by a lofty portal, on each side of which was a magnificent colonnade, on a flat terrace, the roofs of which were supported by rows of pillars, highly ornamented with the most beautiful azure and gold. The colonnade opposite to the entrance, at the further side of the court, was still

⁴⁵ This letter from the Grand Khan to the Pope was discovered in the *Archivio di Castello* by P. Cyrille Karalevskyj. It was identified and deciphered by Pelliot, and has been published by him, together with a facsimile of its seals. (Paul Pelliot, "Les Mongols et la Papauté", *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*, 1922 – 1923, series 3, vol. 3 (23), nos. I and 2, pp. 3 – 30).

⁴⁶ A number of Chinese seals were excavated in Ireland about 1800 and are described in a paper read before the Belfast Literary Society by Edmund Getty in 1850, entitled, *Notices of Chinese Seals found in Ireland*. Getty believes that they were brought to Ireland by early monks and date from the eighth or ninth century.

grander than the others, its roof being richly adorned, the pillars gilt, and the walls on the inner side ornamented with exquisite paintings, representing the histories of former kings.⁴⁷

The travel account focused mainly on the economic side of China, but the Mongol Empire had diplomatic and religious relations with Europe that extended from south Russia and Persia to Europe. In addition, Mongol armies were at times in contact with the Crusaders. As Thomas Francis Carter puts it:

This brought the Mongol armies face to face with the Crusades. Certain of the Mongol allies even proceeded as far as Palestine and sacked Bethlehem, the Crusaders' chief shrine. But as a rule the Mongol Ilkhans (as Hulagu and his successors were called) were more or less allied with the Crusaders against their common enemy, the Saracens. Constant embassies were exchanged between Tabriz, the Mongol capital of Persia, and the later Crusading princes.... A number of embassies were even sent to Europe by the Mongol rulers of Persia, bearing letters to the Pope, to the king of France and to the king of England, and several such letters with their large vermillion seal impressions in Chinese characters are still preserved.⁴⁸

Moreover, direct correspondences were made between the Mongol emperor and the French King during the Yuan Dynasty. Fig 3-2 shows two letters from Ilkhan Argon and Ilkhan Uljiatu to the King of France, dated 1289 and 1305 respectively.

⁴⁷ Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, The Orion Press, New York, 1958, pp. 242 – 243.

⁴⁸ Thomas Francis Carter, *The Invention of Printing in China and its Spread Westward*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1925, P. 126.

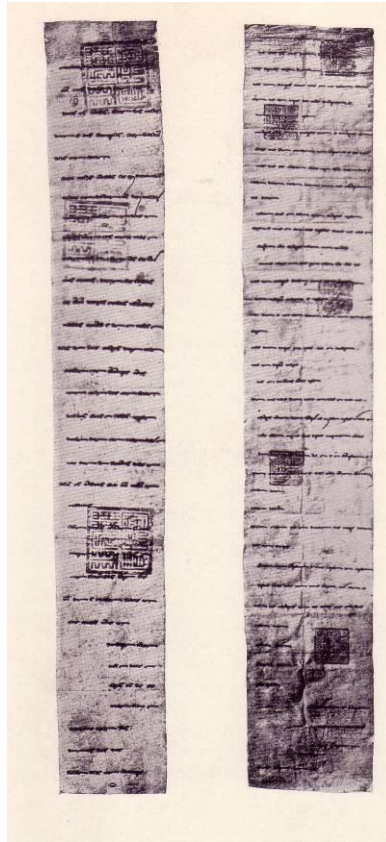


Fig. 3-2 Letters from Mongol Emperor to the King of France, 1289 & 1305

The first letter, dated 1289, is from the Ilkhan Argon, agreeing to join the crusaders the next year and encamp before Damascus, and agreeing, if Jerusalem should be taken by their combined efforts, to turn over the city to the King of France. The second letter, dated 1305, which is nearly ten feet long, is from the Ilkhan Uljiatu. It announces the reunion of the Mongol dominions, and introduces to the King of France two ambassadors. Both letters are in the Mongol language and in Uigur script. The seals are in Chinese (First letter 183 * 25cm. Second letter 300 * 50 cm)

The consequences of these direct correspondences, open trade routes and travel accounts together with the increasing amount of Chinese silk, porcelain and prints

brought to Europe will be examined in the following chapters. Meanwhile, it might be helpful for us to review some faces of Mongols and Chinese that began to appear in Europe in the fourteenth century, which indicate the increasing familiarity with such people in Europe.⁴⁹



Fig. 3-3 *Mongol Warrior*, Pisanello. Study of Kalmuck, Pen and Ink drawing (Musee Du Louvre, Paris).

⁴⁹ For more see Arnold Lauren, *Princely gifts and papal treasures: the Franciscan mission to China and its influence on the art of the West, 1250-1350*, San Francisco, Desiderata Press, 1999, pp. 82 – 90; and Di Sheng, *Fa Xian Zhong Guo* 发现中国, Shangdong Hua Bao Chu Ban She, Ji Nan, 2002, pp. 19 – 30.



Fig. 3-4 Details of Tartar and Mongol spectators in *Martyrdom of Franciscan Friars*, Ambrogio Lorenzetti, ca. 1326, Basilica of San Francesco, Siena.

It is also noteworthy that, probably along with the Mongol battles, gunpowder was introduced from China to Europe during the Yuan Dynasty. Within China, gunpowder was used as early as the T'ang dynasty. According to Chinese annals, it was used in the battles of 1161 and 1162, and again by the northern Chinese against the Mongols in 1232.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ G. Schlegel, *On the Invention and Use of Firearms and Gunpowder in China prior to the Arrival of Europeans*, T'oung Pao, 1902, series 2, Vol. 3, pp. I – II; P. Pelliot, *Bulletin Critique*, etc., T'oung Pao, 1922, Vol. 21, pp. 342- 343.

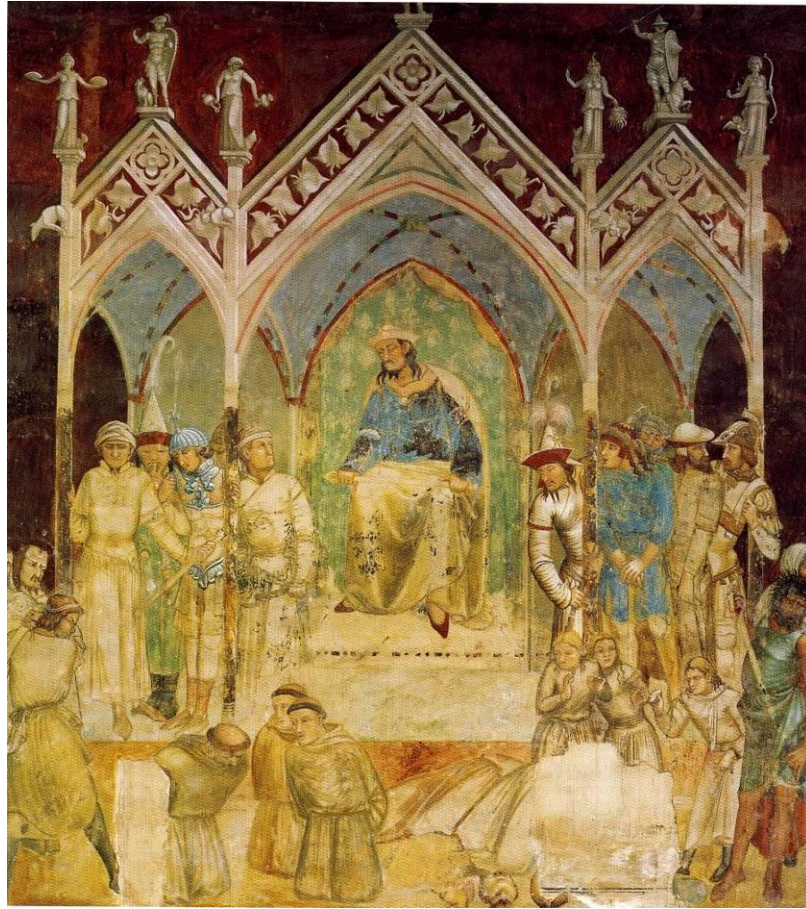


Fig. 3-5 Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Martyrdom of Franciscan Friars*, ca. 1326, Basilica of San Francesco, Siena.

The Arabs became acquainted with saltpeter some time before the end of the thirteenth century and called it Chinese snow, as they called the rocket the Chinese arrow. Roger Bacon (c. 1214 to c. 1294) is the first European writer to mention gunpowder. Thus it is certain that the usage of gunpowder in warfare was known among the Saracens and in Europe very quickly after its first use in warfare in China.⁵¹

⁵¹ Ibid.

3.3 The Meeting of China and Europe during the Fifteenth Century

As stated above, there were continuous and closer connections between China and Europe from the mid-thirteenth century to the mid-fourteenth century. More regular communication, together with travel accounts, helped shape the Western concept of Asia in general and China in particular as a land of wonders. What were the consequences of those connections for Europe? In other words, did Chinese taste influence European decorative arts at such an early time; if so, to what extent?

To answer this question, we need to look into the contemporary historical background first. It is well known that the fifteenth century not only witnessed the rediscovery of the culture of Greece and Rome, but also saw the achievement of closer contact between Western Europe and the Far East. Between 1405 and 1433, the Chinese navigator Zheng He sailed the southern seas with his ships loaded with porcelain. He reached as far as the Red Sea and the West Coast of Africa, visiting over thirty countries. During the Yongle period of the Ming Dynasty (c. 1423), over 1200 foreign buyers visited China to purchase porcelain. During the entire Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644), the Royal Family directly controlled its production. Accordingly, no efforts were spared in finding raw materials of the finest quality and in the training and selection of the best artisans.⁵² It is also worth remembering that in 1492, when Columbus set sail, his aim was to find Asia, although the first successful discovery of a sea route there was actually achieved by the Portuguese a few years later. In 1497, Vasco da Gama opened

⁵² For more see Louise Levathes, *When China Ruled The Seas: The Treasure Fleet of the Dragon Throne, 1405 – 1433*, Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford, pp. 145 – 153; and Mary Salgado Lobo Antunes, *The Porcelain Route, Ming and Qing Dynasties*, Oriental Foundation, Lisbon, 1999, p. 17.

the sea route to the East by way of the Cape of Good Hope and seventeen years later the Portuguese reached China, to initiate commerce, which grew steadily thereafter.

What happened to the porcelain distributed by Zheng He? Is it possible that some of it might have traveled to Europe? There are no definitive answers, but it is noticeable that Chinese porcelains began to appear more and more frequently in European literature and paintings in the fifteenth century.

The first appearance of porcelain in the Near East of which we have definite evidence was in 1171 (or 1188) when Saladin sent a present of forty pieces of Chinese porcelain to the Sultan of Damascus. It is said that the manufacture of porcelain was first mentioned in 1470 in Venice and the statement is made that the Venetians learned the art from the Arabs.⁵³

⁵³ Thomas Francis Carter, *The Invention of Printing in China and its Spread Westward*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1925, pp. 92 – 93.

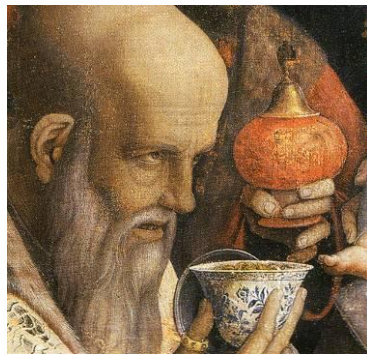


Fig. 3-6 & 3-7 (detail of 3-6) Andrea Mantegna, *The Adoration of the Magi*, 1487 – 1500, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.



Fig. 3-8 Yuan (Mongol) Early 14th-century porcelain dish of a type that occasionally reached Europe in the late 14th & 15th centuries, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

What effects were caused by those porcelains along with the exotic patterns depicted on them? In his lecture entitled “China and Europe,” Rudolf Wittkower points out that, as early as the fourteenth century, imitations of Chinese patterns were popular in Venice, Florence and Lucca (the center of the Italian industry):

During the hundred years of trade contacts with China, the West keenly purchased Chinese silk fabrics and garments, which became immensely fashionable, probably as a mark of oriental opulence and wealth. Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, for example, wore a Chinese dalmatic and others followed his example. With the Chinese fabrics came a new type of pattern. In fact, the newly rising Chinese fashion spelled the end of the symmetrically and geometrically arranged designs of Near Eastern derivation with their endorsed birds and animals and antithetical groups contained in circles. Exotic animals and birds, fire-breathing dragons and phoenixes with marvelous

feathery tails... and the like are strewn over the entire field without containing frames.

In the fourteenth century, the silk manufactures in Venice, Florence, and, above all,

Lucca (the center of the Italian industry) thrived on imitations of Chinese patterns.⁵⁴

Those imitations surely paved the way for the popularity of the Chinese version of the lotus in the fifteenth-century Europe. Wittkower goes on to say: “The more fantastic elements of Chinese fabrics were repudiated in the fifteenth century when the regular so-called pomegranate design came into fashion, a design that in its turn traced its decent from the Chinese version of the lotus”⁵⁵ (as shown in figs. 3-9, 3-10, 3-11).

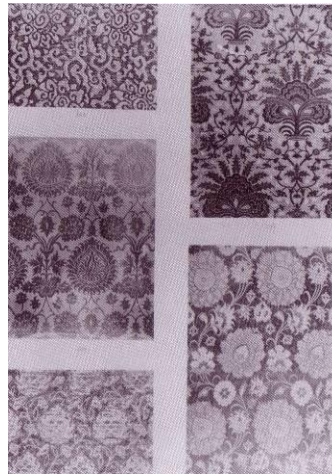


Fig. 3-9 Chinese Textiles, Fourteenth Century. Reproduced in von Falke, *Kunstgeschichte*

⁵⁴ Rudolf Wittkower, “China and Europe I: Early Connections”, *Selected Lectures of Rudolf Wittkower, The Impact of Non-European civilizations on the Art of the West*, compiled by Donald Martin Reynolds, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 152 – 153.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 154



Fig. 3-10 Italian Textile (Luccan), Fourteenth century. Reproduced in von Falke, *Kunstgeschichte*

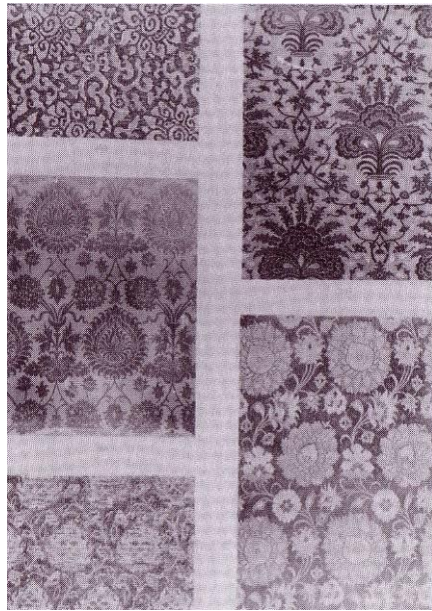


Fig. 3-11 Italian Textile (Venetian). Fifteenth Century. Reproduced in von Falke, *Kunstgeschichte*

Furthermore, with regard to paintings, scholars have also found connections between the sudden awakening of painting, which deviated from traditional forms in

Italian art from the thirteenth century onward, with the impression made on the missionaries and artists of that time by the advanced culture of China. Hermann Goetz, for example, argues that “many stylistic and typological elements found in the early work of Sienese and Florentines are only comprehensible in terms of Far Eastern art.”⁵⁶

In summary, it was through varying and increasing currents of trade and interchange that Chinese silks, porcelains and artistic influences found their way to Europe before the sixteenth century. The trade that began under the empires of the Caesars and the Han and which was furthered by the Caliphs and the T’ang reached its culmination in the reign of the Mongol Empire and the Crusades. And the porcelain and the Chinese silks that had been imported and sold in Western markets by the sixteenth century enabled Europe to accumulate an understanding of the civilization of China, a comprehension that would serve as the foundation for interchange on a larger scale between China and Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁵⁷

Despite these advances, the evidence in the following chapters echoes Rudolf Wittkower’s argument:

In the seventeenth century a completely new image of China began to develop.

Whereas China had been a land of marvels and mystery throughout the Middle Ages, it now began to be regarded as a country in which unequal social, political, and religious

⁵⁶ Hermann Goetz, “Oriental Types and Scenes in Renaissance and Baroque Painting”, *The Burlington Magazine*, LXXIII (1938), p. 55.

⁵⁷ More refer to James C. Y. Watt, Anne E. Wardwell, *When Silk was Gold*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1998, p. 7; and David Howard and John Ayers, *China for the West, Chinese Porcelain & Other Decorative Arts for Export Illustrated from the Mottahedeh Collection*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London and New York, 1978.

wisdom and enlightenment reigned, and this view of China had important consequences for Europe.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ “China and Europe: I Early Connections”, *Selected Lectures of Rudolf Wittkower, The Impact of Non-European civilizations on the Art of the West*, compiled by Donald Martin Reynolds, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, p. 158.

CHAPTER IV: CHINESE INFLUENCE ON PORTUGUESE ART AND ARCHITECTURE

4.1 Trade and Other Connections between Spain, Portugal and China

In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, European adventurers made a series of daring voyages during which they discovered not only the New World but also better routes to Asia. Kindled by the Renaissance spirit of inquiry and aided by recent improvements in navigation, both Portuguese and Spanish explorers contributed greatly to the establishment of direct and subsequently continuous relations between Europe and the distant Oriental world. The economic desire of gaining high profit through bringing home such Chinese luxury goods as silks, porcelains and other artifacts; together with the passion for the acquisition of knowledge through an exchange of information unfolded soon after the “Great Discovery.” In this process, the exposure to and dissemination of first-hand knowledge of Asia gave rise to major alterations not only in the flow of men and goods but also in European lifestyles and ways of thinking.⁵⁹ The first-hand reports of Portuguese travelers greatly challenged European geographical knowledge and ultimately led to considerable alterations in the traditional view of the world. When Vasco da Gama and those who followed in his footsteps returned from India, they brought exotic merchandise ranging from spices and medicine

⁵⁹ For more see Donald Frederick Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, pp. xvii - xviii; Huang, Qinghua, *Zhong Pu guan xi shi 1513-1999*, *História das relações Sino-Portuguesas 中葡关系史1513-1999*, Huang Shan shu she, He Fei, 2006, Vol I.; and Di Sheng, *Fa Xian Zhong Guo 发现中国*, Shangdong Hua Bao Chu Ban She, Ji Nan, 2002, pp. 40 – 46.

to silk and porcelain, but, more importantly, unique information on various areas that had never been considered before.⁶⁰

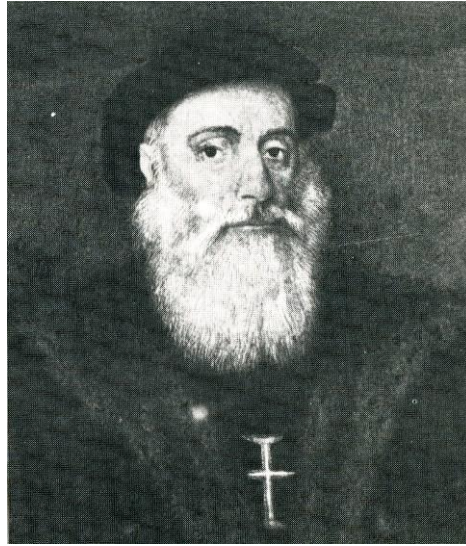


Fig. 4-1 Vasco da Gama by an unknown artist, c. 1500, The National Maritime Museum, London

Among the novelties learned by the first Portuguese expeditions was information on China, which soon triggered both curiosity and expectations.⁶¹ (See fig. 4-1, the first European map of China, published in 1584.)

⁶⁰ It is recorded that Vasco da Gama brought back from his voyage to the Orient in 1498 various pieces of porcelain he had been given in India as presents for the king, Don Manuel. Inventories made at the time show that the king bought Chinese porcelains and ceramics as well as jewels, fabrics and other artifacts. The monarch gave away many of the pieces he received, and a letter dated 1512 refers to a dozen pieces of Chinese porcelain given by the king to the Jerominous Monastery in Belem. China porcelain, cloths and amber had also been given to King Don Manuel's wife, Dona Maria, who was the daughter of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella, "the Catholic." For further reference, see Reflexos Pedro Dias, *Simbolos e Imagens do Cristianismo na Porcelana da China*, Cat., 1996, p. 24.

⁶¹ See Donald Frederick Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991, pp. 9- 10.



Fig. 4-2 Abraham Ortelius, 1527 – 1598, the first Western map of China based on the reports of the Portuguese mapmaker Luis de Barbuda, which was first published in Abrahama, Ortelius' *Teatruem orbis terrarium* (rev. ed.; Antwerp) in 1584 [Reproduced in Alfredo Pinheiro Marques, *A Cartographia Portuguesa do Japão (Séculos XVI – XVII)* (Lisboa), Oriental Foundation, Lisbon, 1996, p. 153]

The curiosity about China and Chinese civilization was further intensified by the accumulation of more first-hand descriptions from the beginning of the sixteenth century. Because the Spanish governors and missionaries in the Philippines regularly sent books, maps, and other sources of information about China back to the royal court, it is not surprising that today we see that the inventory of Philip's (Philip IV) collection lists about twenty thousand articles, including his porcelain collection of over three thousand pieces.⁶²

⁶² J.C. Davillier, *Les origins de la porcelaine en Europe*, Paris et London, Librairie de l'Art, 1882, pp. 125 – 135.

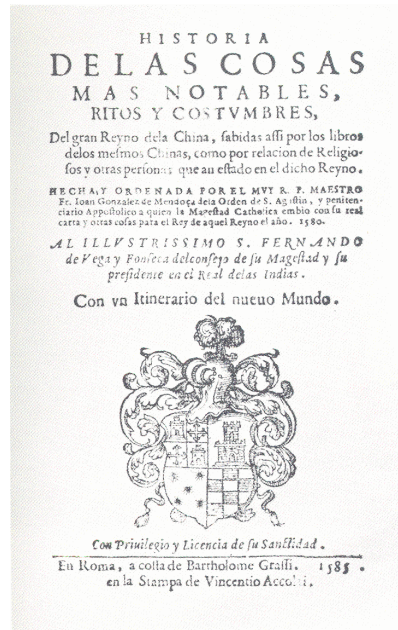


Fig. 4-3 Juan Gonzalez Mendoz, *Historia de las cosas mas notables, ritos y costumbres del gran Reyno de las China*, Rome, 1585

This increasing awareness of things Chinese, led by a Spanish king, is further demonstrated by contemporary Spanish literature: in describing the preparations being made for the festival of St. Hermenegild in Seville, poet Luis de Gongora (1561 – 1627) writes:

One gives the silk of China to the breeze

Another Persia's costly tapestries

Hang out in sunny gladness on the walls⁶³

⁶³ Tran. Of Churton, op. cit. (n. III), II. P. 72; for original see J Mille y Gimenez and I. Mille y Gimenez (eds.), *Gongora, Obras completas*, Madrid, 1956, p. 571.

In Spain, based on all available verbal and written reports, the most influential book written on China was the work of a Spanish Augustinian friar, Juan Gonzalez Mendoz, *Historia de las cosas mas notables, ritos y costumbres del gran Reyno de las China*, published in Rome and issued in Valencia in 1585, which was reprinted in Spanish eleven times by the end of the century. As the first of its kind synthesizing what was then known in Europe about China, this book became a major source for contemporary European historians and readers.⁶⁴ The Chinese porcelain that is discussed later in this chapter, together with its production process, was depicted in *Historia de las cosas mas notables, ritos y costumbres del gran Reyno de las China* as below:

The apothecarie that selleth simples, hath the like table: there be also shops full of earthen vessels of diuers making, riddle, greene, yellow, and gilt; it is so good cheape that for foure rials of plate they giue fiftie peeces: very strong earth, the which they doo breake all to peeces and grinde it, and put it into sesternes with water, made of lime and stone; and after that they haue well tumbled and tossed it in the water, of the creame that is vpon it they make the finest sort of them, and the lower they go, spending that substance that is the courser: they make them after the forme and fashion as they do here, and afterward they do gild them, and make them of what colour they please, the which will never be lost: then they put them into their killes and burne them. This hath beene seene and is of a truth, as appeareth in a booke set foorth in the Italian toonge, by Duardo Banbosa, they do make them of periwinkle shelles of the sea: the which they do

⁶⁴ Juan Gonzalez Mendoz, *The history of the great and mighty kingdom of China and the situation thereof*, compiled by the Padre Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza and now reprinted from the early translation of R. Parke; edited by Sir George T. Staunton; with an introduction by R.H. Major, London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1853 – 1854, “Introduction”, pp. lxxxi – lxxxii.

grinde and put them under the ground to refine them, whereas they lie 100 years: and many other things he doth treat of to this effect. But if that were true, they should not make so great a number of them as is made in that kingdom, and is brought into Portugall, and carried into the Peru, and Noua Espana, and into other parts of the world: which is a sufficient prooffe for that which is said.⁶⁵

In spite of all the interest in information about China, direct Chinese influence on Spanish art and architecture was rather limited. For one thing, the sumptuary laws in Spain imposed many restrictions on the circulation of imported goods from Asia. A law of 1494, for instance, prohibiting the importation and sale of textiles (except those for religious use) using gold or silver threads was reaffirmed and revised in 1534 by Charles V. And a decree of 1593 sternly forbade silversmiths and all other persons from buying, selling, or making tables, coffers, bureaus, or buffets decorated with silver.⁶⁶ At the same time, however, Portugal became more intimately involved in Asian trade in general and Chinese trade in particular; as a result, the city of Lisbon in Portugal became a center where the products of Oriental industry and art were on display throughout the sixteenth century.

Some other distinctions exist between the Portuguese and Spanish empires, which also account for the more intimate interactions between Portugal and China. As fig. 4-4 shows, while the Portuguese concentrated in Africa and the East, focusing primarily on sea power and trading posts, the Spanish moved westward, concentrating

⁶⁵ Ibid, pp. 33 – 34.

⁶⁶ J. C. Davillier, *Recherches sur l'orfèverie en Espagne au moyen age et a la Renaissance: documents inedits tires des archives*, Paris, 1879, pp. 120 – 122.

on the New World and focusing primarily on conquest and colonization. Thus it is natural for us to see more literary accounts of China circulated in Portugal, and this consciousness of things Chinese is reflected in contemporary Portuguese art and architecture. Therefore, this chapter will concentrate on Chinese influence on Portuguese art and architecture through an examination of available visual and literary sources in contemporary Portugal.

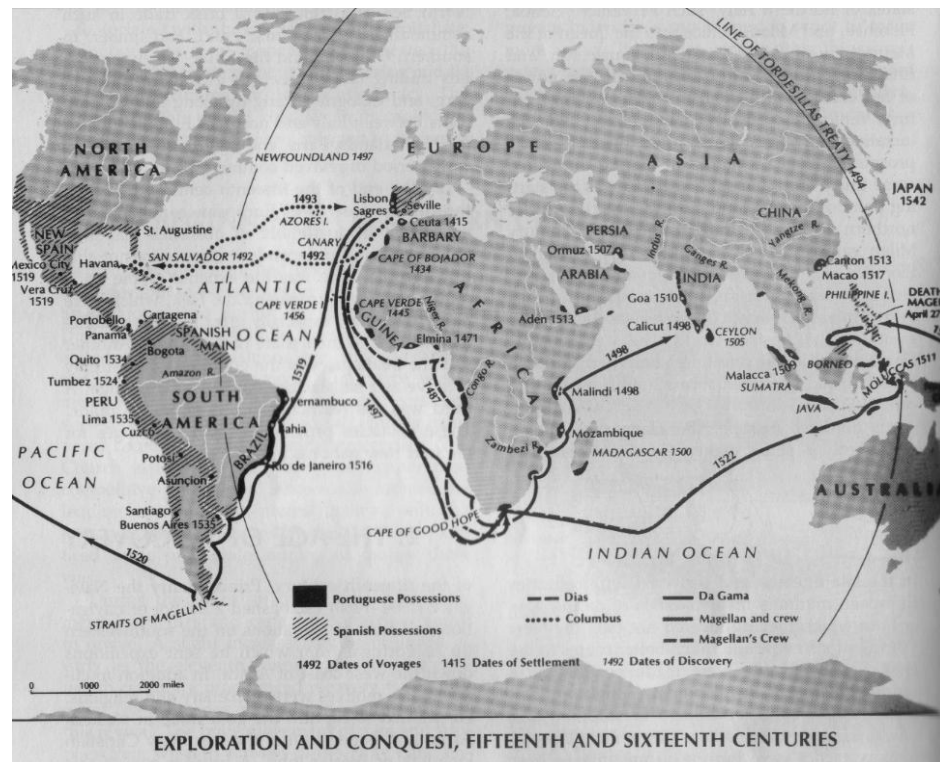


Fig. 4-4 The routes taken by some of the early Portuguese and Spanish explorers.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ John B. Harrison, Richard E. Sullivan & Dennis Sherman, *A Short History of Western Civilization*, Vol. I, McGraw-Hill., New York, 1994, p. 346.

Throughout the sixteenth century, Portugal played a leading role in communicating with China. Following Jorge Alvares' first arrival in 1513, Rafael Perestrelo reached Canton two years later and established direct and unbroken relations that eventually gave rise to extensive cultural and religious communications with the Chinese empire. Thanks to the great Portuguese voyages, Europe not only expanded geographical knowledge from the first-hand reports of travelers, which helped to redefine the sense of “otherness,” but also gained greatly sought-after access to silk, porcelain and other exotic commodities, which were thereafter exported from China in substantial quantities.⁶⁸ Figs. 4-5 & 4-6 show an example of the artifacts that were imported into Portugal during this time.



Fig. 4-5 & 4-6, Ming Dynasty, Wanli period (1573 – 1619), 1590 – 1610, Jiangxi province, Jingdezhen kilns, Porcelain Bowls painted in underglaze blue, so-called Kraakporselein, the Museum of Anastácio Gonçalves, Lisbon.

⁶⁸ David Howard and John Ayers, *China for the West, Chinese Porcelain & Other Decorative Arts for Export illustrated from the Mottahedeh Collection*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London and New York, 1978, p. 7.

These porcelain bowls and dishes, depicting Chinese landscapes, architecture and animals with symbolic meanings, served as an effective means for enabling many European users to visualize China and Chinese culture, which vision was further reinforced through exposure to numerous contemporary literary accounts on the same subject. During the process of this dissemination, Portuguese contemporary art and architecture began to show more traits of Chinese influence, a point which will be explored later. First, however, let us look upon available contemporary Portuguese visual and literary sources on China and Chinese art for evidence of possible inspirations.

4.2 Literary and Visual Resources on China and Chinese Art Available in Portugal in the Sixteenth Century

As stated above, the Portuguese voyages produced significant results other than high profits. The gathering of first-hand information on a previously unknown situation led to the first trustworthy reports on China itself. Among them, one of the most influential is *Suma Oriental*, written by Tome Pires, who was a factory clerk in Malacca between 1512 and 1515. It is recorded that “Part of this work was published, in Italian, in Venice in 1550, and revolutionized European knowledge of South East Asia, China and the Far East.”⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Maria Alexandra da Costa Gomes, *Museum Guide Macao*, Scientific and Cultural Center, Ministry of Science and Technology, p. 27.

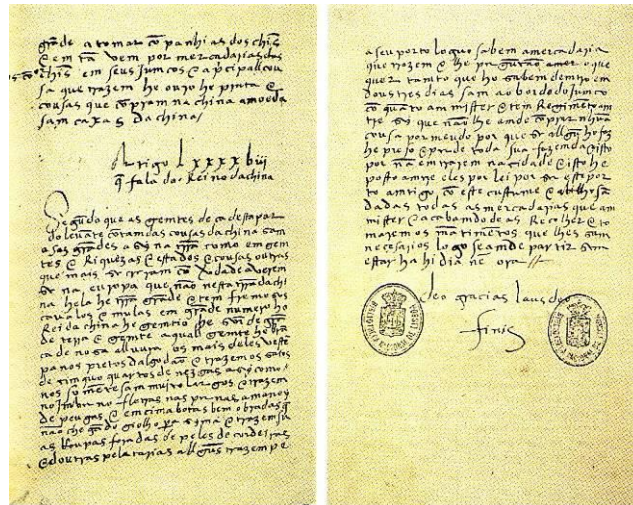


Fig. 4-7 Pages from *Suma Oriental*, Tome Pires, paper, 1512 – 1515. The manuscript belongs to Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, Portugal.

According to Pires, there was practically an infinite quantity of porcelain (Loureiro, p. 146) in China. The *Suma Oriental* not only portrayed China's trade, but also provided the first descriptions of certain aspects of Chinese life.

[...] there exists a wealth of both land, and of peoples and riches and states and other things, such as was thought only in truth to exist in Europe, and not in this land of China [...] They eat with two sticks, holding the porcelain dish with the left hand and with the right hand and with the mouth and the sticks they take their meal [...] The king of China is a pagan, lord of a great land and people, and these people are white like ourselves [...] China is a land of much merchandise and many provisions [...] they come in junks to Malacca with merchandises, and bring white silk and damask and colored satins, brocades in their own style, seed pearls, porcelain in countless shapes

and forms, copper, pedra hume, musk, coffers with gold leaf, elaborate fans and many other things which escape my memory[...].⁷⁰

In addition, *Suma Oriental* contains the earliest written Western account of Macao. Under the name *Oquem*, or Ho-keng (Mirror of the Sea) in Cantonese, the island was described as lying a day and a night's sea journey from Canton, "[...] *It is the port of the Ryukuans and other nations [...]*". Pires' admiration of Chinese civilization can be best revealed from the following statement:

[...] it would be difficult to find another people who, in the greatness of their cities or the beauty of their buildings, in their standard of living and civility or in their lively interest in the arts, may be compared with the Chinese. [...]⁷¹

The *Suma Oriental* is among the first Portuguese sources to systematically introduce China and Chinese civilization, and it covers a variety of topics. As Joao Rordrigues Calvao points out:

The *Suma Oriental* included the vast expanse of its territory, the refined administration system, the tax system controlling external relations, the high degree of courtesy and the absolute political centralism among other subjects that would be summarized in later Portuguese treatises. Naturally, all of these reports were confirmed in *Livro* by

⁷⁰ Macao Scientific and Cultural Center, *Museum Guide*, Macao Scientific and Cultural Center, Lisbon, pp. 27 -28.

⁷¹ Also quoted from Tome Pires, in D. Jeronimo Osorio-De Gloria, Lisboa, 1549.

Duarte Barbosa. The latter work, while poorer in terms of the information provided, was equally enthusiastic about matters Chinese.⁷²

Not satisfied by Pires' account, the Portuguese kept moving beyond purely commercial questions and began reporting on the habits and customs of the Chinese people, their social and religious practices, the main beliefs, political organization, administrative system, the means of justice, and urban planning. As a result, the middle of the sixteenth century saw a genuine explosion of information in Portuguese overseas circles, with numerous reports, treatises, charts and itineraries being drawn up by those who had visited China. Merchants such as Galiote Pereira, Afonso Ramires and Amro Pereira and priests such as Melchior Nunes Barreto, Luis Frois and Ferno Mendes Pinto all wrote fascinating reports of their Chinese experience.⁷³

Within this context, the report entitled *Algumas Cousas Sabidas da China* (Some known things about China) by Galiote Perira, completed circa 1563, is of special importance. In this book, like Tome Pires, Galiote Pereira openly praised several aspects of the Chinese system, such as the high quality of the roads and bridges, the perfect design of the cities, the rational organization of production (crafts, fisheries and agriculture), the efficiency of local government and the impartiality of the legal system. In addition, he gives special attention to porcelain, which is of great interest to the Portuguese at this time. Although Galiote Pereira's treatise was not printed in its entirety at the time, it did circulate widely in manuscript form, and the information

⁷² Edited by Joao Rordrigues Calvao, *The Porcelain Route, Ming and Qing Dynasties*, Oriental Foundation in Lisbon, 1999, pp. 45 -46.

⁷³ Ibid, pp. 49 – 50.

made a decisive contribution to knowledge of Chinese civilization in Portugal by confirming and adding to previously published information from Portuguese chronicles.⁷⁴

In the same vein, Joao de Barros' work *Asia – Decada I*, published in Lisbon in 1552, demonstrates great admiration for Chinese civilization: “As regards the king of China, we can truly say that he alone is greater than all in land, people, power wealth and policy.”⁷⁵

Galiote Pereira's report and the chronicles by Castanheda and Barros helped generate a tendency to idealize Chinese civilization. For the late sixteenth century Portuguese, China became a special geographical location which had brought together all the characteristics of an ideal society with regard to politics, economics, technology, administration and the legal system, and even on an intellectual level. This admiration of China, governed by “one of the greatest kings known in the world” (Orta, col. 12), was reflected in all the major works of Portuguese literature on overseas matters in the second half of the sixteenth century. The process of acquiring knowledge and idealizing Chinese civilization culminated in the *Tratado das Cousas da China* by Brother Gaspar da Cruz, printed in Evora between 1569 and 1570. His *Tratado* was regarded as the first work dealing exclusively with China to be published in Europe and he carefully

⁷⁴ Ibid, pp. 49 – 50.

⁷⁵ Joao de Barros, *Asia – Decadas I*, Lisboa : Sá da Costa, 1945-46, Liv. 9, cap. 2.

better quality ... Many façades are decorated with them although there are seldom buildings of more than one story...⁷⁷

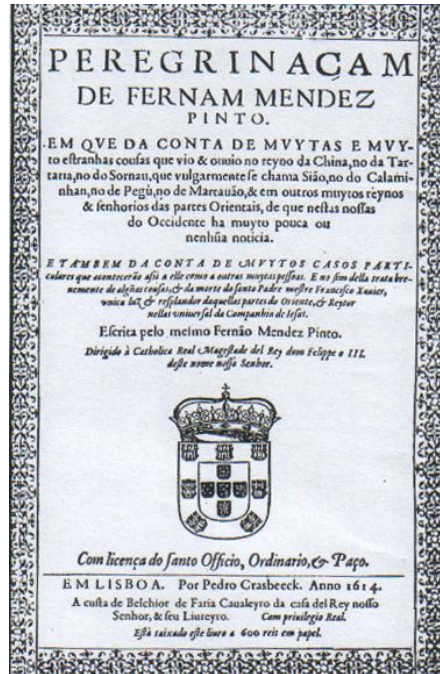


Fig. 4-9 Fernao Mendes Pinto *Peregrinacao*, 1614

In 1614, Fernao Mendes Pinto described the use of tiles in Chinese interior design in his *Peregrinacao*:

... There are large areas of residential buildings surrounding the Palace, which has its garden, forest and various kinds of fountains and pipes. The walls inside the building are decorated by fine tiles...⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Suoying Wang, *Pu Tao Ya Ren Zai Hua Jian Wen Lu*, Han Nan Chu Ban She, Guang Zhou, 1998, p. 91.

⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 205.

Considering the fact that the admiration for things Chinese was so widespread in Portugal at this time, what impact would the above descriptions have? To answer this question, we naturally turn to contemporary Portuguese architecture.

4.3 Evidence of Chinese Influence on Portuguese Art and Architecture

Unfortunately most buildings were destroyed in the 1755 Lisbon earthquake. However, there is some seventeenth-century architecture that survived the disaster, and this reflects a tendency to decorate buildings with blue-and-white tiles or directly with blue-and-white porcelain dishes in large quantities in the interior. While surviving earlier Moorish influence might explain the former, could the above literary reports and accounts have given rise to the latter trend? Considering the popularity and the wide usage of Chinese porcelain in Portugal at this time, an affirmative answer is highly possible. One example can be found at the Palacio de Santos, where the kings Don Manuel I, Don Joao III and Don Sebastiao resided from 1501 to 1578:

Nevertheless, Lisbon retains some extremely important evidence on imported and collected porcelains which has survived for more than three hundred years. In the Santos Palace, which from 1501 was the residence of the Portuguese kings and, from 1589, of the Lancastre family, there is a small room with a pyramidal ceiling covered with 261 dishes, dating from the mid-sixteenth and early seventeenth century.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Maura Rinaldi, *Kraak Porcelain: A Moment in the History of Trade*, Bamboo Publishing Ltd., London 1989, p. 63.



Fig. 4-10 Porcelain decorating the ceiling of Palacio de Santos, Novais, Mario (Currently the site of the French embassy in Lisbon)

It is noteworthy that all 261 plates adorning the ceiling are of a variety of sizes and decorative styles, nearly all blue-and-white and nearly all were made in China during the Ming Dynasty, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁸⁰ As Daisy Lion-Goldschmidt points out: “The ceiling’s layout indicates an already considerable knowledge of Chinese porcelain - first come the four plates from the beginning of the

⁸⁰ Daisy Lion-Goldschmidt, *Arts Asiatiques - Les Porcelains du Palais de Santos*, 1988, pp. 4 – 5.

sixteenth century, then those from the Jiajing period (1522 – 1566), followed by pieces from the Wanli period (1573 – 1619).”⁸¹



Fig. 4-11 Church interior decoration: the usage of blue-and-white porcelain in decorating the 17th century church in Lisbon Altar Frontal, Lisbon

Probably led by the taste of the Portuguese kings and continuing traditions undoubtedly influenced by Moorish architectural practice but also supported by contemporary Portuguese literary accounts of the usage of tiles in Chinese architecture, it became fashionable to decorate the interior of Portuguese buildings with blue-and-white porcelain. Meanwhile, differing in style from Portuguese human portraits and religious paintings, natural motifs began to filter into many aspects of Portugal's architecture. For example, as fig. 4-11 shows, the walls began to be made of scenes of natural landscape blending well with portraits of saints and niches in seventeenth-century Portuguese churches.

⁸¹ Ibid, p.4

In addition to the use of blue-and-white porcelain in interior design, how popular were those porcelain dishes in Portugal? An example from numerous references to porcelain found in the papers of King Joao III and his wife, Queen Catarina of Austria, can give us some hint:

I placed an order with a Chin captain I know here asking him to have a few pieces made for your Highness. And you should know that they are right Chins here in Malacca because money and goods can be entrusted to them and they return with them.⁸²

As for the use of porcelain in Portuguese society other than among royalty, historian Maria Antonia Pinto de Matos points out its popularity in Portuguese daily life:

There was not a single nobleman in Portugal living at court and in his provincial manor house, who did not possess Chinese porcelain. Like other exotic items it was quickly adopted into Portuguese daily life... The rapid way in which this order was filled allows us to believe that the volume of porcelain on the Lisbon market was considerable.⁸³

⁸² ANTT, Chronological text, pt. 1, m. 41, doc. 29.

⁸³ Quoted from *The Porcelain Route, Ming and Qing Dynasties*, Joao Rordrigues Calvao, Oriental Foundation in Lisbon, Lisbon, 1999, p. 115.

According to the Venetian knights and Lippomani, who visited the Portuguese capitals in 1580, there were half a dozen shops which sold “extremely fine porcelain [of] very varied shapes” in Rua Nova dos Mercadores alone.”⁸⁴

What are these porcelains? What motifs, themes were depicted on them? And what did contemporary Portuguese see in them? A range of Chinese porcelains are in the collections of various Portuguese museums, enabling us to answer these questions at least partially. In addition, recent excavations in Portugal also contribute greatly to the understanding of the taste of Portuguese consumers.

Before answering the above questions, however, it is necessary for us to gain a better understanding of the contemporary porcelain exported from China to Europe in the Ming Dynasty (A. D. 1368 to 1644). It is known that Mohammedan communities at the Chinese ports played an important role in trade over a long period, while during the Zheng De era (A. D. 1506 – 1521), Muslim eunuchs even enjoyed high favor at court in Beijing.⁸⁵ Even before the reign of Zheng De, the Yongle reign (A. D. 1360 – 1424) porcelain in China was recorded to be under Islamic influence both in terms of the painting material and some motifs:

The Yongle emperor (A. D. 1360 – 1424) not only supervised the details of the new palace but took an interest in the arts, particularly porcelain and lacquerware. ... During his reign the blue-and-white porcelains developed a richness of color due in

⁸⁴ Alexandre Herculano, *Opusculos*, vol. VI, Lisbon, 1986, p. 120.

⁸⁵ David Howard and John Ayers, *China for the West, Chinese Porcelain & Other Decorative Arts for Export illustrated from the Mottahedeh Collection*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London and New York, 1978, p. 46.

part to the use of an imported cobalt blue – high in iron and low in manganese – that is called “sunima” or “sulama” and thought to have come from Kashan, Persia. Zheng He helped secure this prized imported cobalt and thus played some role in creating the improvements in the distinctive blue-and-white porcelains for which the Ming dynasty would become well known. At this time, Sanskrit script and sea creature motifs – fish, sea monsters, waves – also came into porcelain design for the first time.⁸⁶



Fig. 4-12 & 4-13, Ewer with Persian inscription, mark and period Zheng De Period (1506 --1521), square in shape and massively potted, with a tubular neck. Later near Eastern additions, possibly Turkish, are the angular replacement handle and curving spout of gilt copper.

Fig. 4-12 and 4-13 give us an example of porcelain of this quality and type bearing Mohammedan inscriptions:

⁸⁶ Louise Levathes, *When China Ruled the Seas The Treasure Fleet of the Dragon Throne 1405 – 1433*, Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford, 1994, pp. 152 – 153.

Phrases in Persian may be translated: ‘O ye caller to prayer in the House of Religion / Come to perform the ablution and prepare yourself for prayer.’... Many of them are writing table accessories (boxes, brush-rests etc.) which are among the best products of the Zheng De reign, one during which Muslims enjoyed unusual favor at the Chinese court.⁸⁷

In addition, Chinese porcelain that was made for Middle Eastern markets that was exported to Portugal made it even more difficult to single out the Chinese influence from Islamic taste:

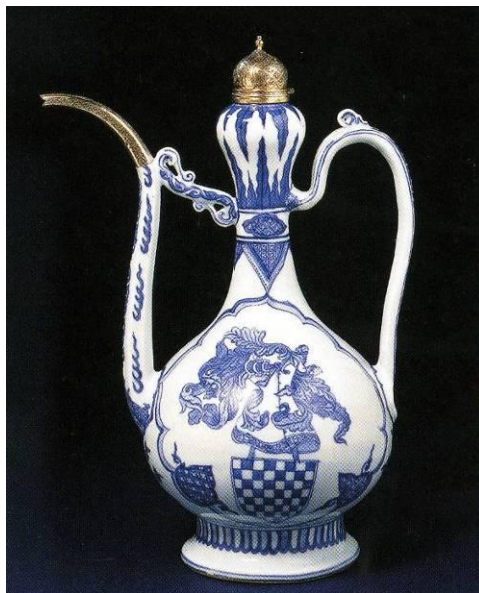


Fig. 4-14 Ewer with the arms of the Peixoto family, porcelain, with decoration in underglaze blue, with contemporary silver Persian mounts China, mark and reign of the emperor Jiajing (1522 – 66), Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

⁸⁷Ibid, p. 48.

There were therefore a number of different ways in which Chinese taste could have influenced Portuguese art and architecture. First, Chinese porcelain made for Middle East markets exported onward to Portugal; second, Moorish and Mamluk porcelain vessels and tiles imitating Chinese or influenced by Chinese designs reaching Portugal, and finally, direct influence from Chinese wares themselves imported into Portugal from China. Fig. 4-14 illustrates an example of the first influence, a mid-sixteenth-century ewer, which probably had been made for the Middle Eastern market, as its form and contemporary Persian silver mounts suggest. As no pre-existing wares in European shapes could be found, Portuguese clients often adapted such items, as the coats of arms on their ewers demonstrate.⁸⁸

With the complexity of Chinese porcelain and its possible Islamic influence in mind, we are now able to explore further in Chinese and, in some cases, both Chinese and Islamic influence in Portuguese art.

Among all the Portuguese museums, Anastacio Goncalves' collection is most significant because it was almost entirely built up through acquisitions from Portuguese antiquarians and families, and the majority of the pieces are dated from the Ming (1368 – 1644) and Qing (1644 – 1911) dynasties. An examination of these pieces provides a glimpse of what porcelain was exported from China to Portugal via cargo vessels.

Fig. 4-15 presents us with a typical example of the common blue-and-white porcelain that was used in Portugal in the sixteenth century. In this piece we see an asymmetrical composition of a Chinese seascape in the center, which is surrounded by

⁸⁸ Rose Kerr, "Asia in Europe: Porcelain and Enamel for the West", *Encounters: The Meeting of Asia and Europe 1500 – 1800*, edited by Anna Jackson & Amin Jaffer, V&A Publications, p. 224.

a central medallion, scalloped and lobed. This idyllic picture is framed by a border divided into motifs inspired by brocades, and the sides are divided into nine large panels with a white background picked out on the top edge and decorated alternately with flowers (chrysanthemum, peony and lotus), fruit and a bird.



Fig. 4-15 Ming Dynasty, Wanli Period (1573 – 1619), c. 1600, porcelain painted in underglaze blue, so-called Kraaksporselein, Museum of Anastacio Goncalves, Lisbon.



Fig. 4-16 Porcelain painted in underglaze blue, so-called Kraaksporselein, China, c. 1600, Museum of Anastacio Goncalves, Lisbon.

In fig. 4-16, more Chinese motifs are arranged in a similar asymmetrical manner. Other than landscape and plants, we see pagodas, pavilions and leafy trees surrounded by a rim filled with flower-patterns. A double-roofed pavilion and pagoda together with the leafy tree are again seen in fig. 4-17, reflecting the popularity of the depiction of Chinese architecture in these two-dimensional porcelains. As mentioned above, in both figs. 4-16 and 4-17, we can also discern some Islamic taste in the patterns of plants and floral design.



Fig. 4-17 Ming Dynasty, second half of the 16th century, porcelain painted in underglaze blue, Museum of Anastacio Goncalves, Lisbon.



Fig. 4-18 Ceramic artifacts found in Santa Clara-a-Velha, Portugal.

If we examine the recent Santa Clara-a-Velha excavation in Portugal, the nearly 5,000 fragments of Chinese porcelain found in the excavation reveal a clearer picture. Among those fragments, it was possible to partially reconstruct some 200 pieces of original Chinaware. It was found that almost all the pieces were in blue-and-white with the exception of a bowl with a *kirande* decoration and a bowl with an imperial yellow

decoration.⁸⁹ From these remaining pieces, we can discern some typical characteristics of the porcelains that were distributed to Europe during the sixteenth century. Similar to those pieces we have seen in Anastacio Goncalves' museum, themes such as Chinese landscapes invoking picturesque scenes of life and architectural features and boats were emerging in these porcelain pieces, in accord with the new motifs introduced in China's late Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644). It is said that the exoticism of these pieces made them highly appreciated by the Europeans. (fig. 4-19, 4-20)⁹⁰

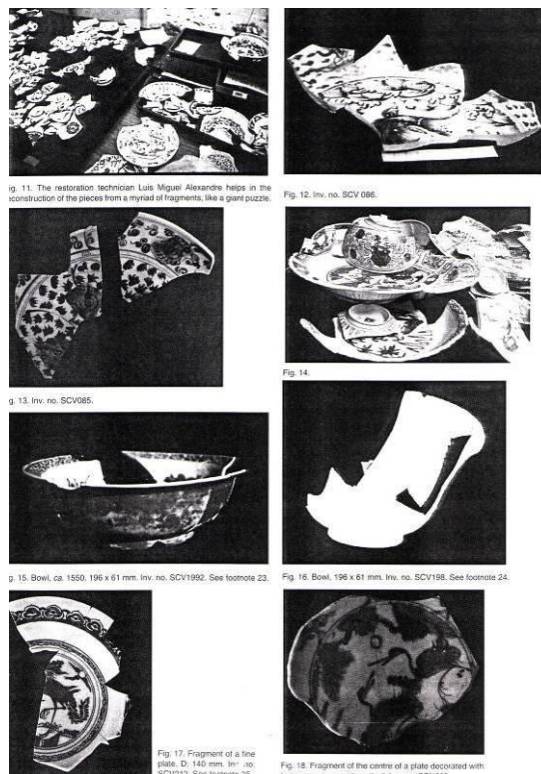


Fig. 4-19 Ceramic artifacts found and reconstructed in Santa Clara-a-Velha, Portugal.

⁸⁹ Paulo Cesar Santos, 'The Chinese Porcelain of Santa Clara-a-Velha, Coimbra: Fragments of a Collection', *Oriental Art*, Vol XLIX NO. 3, pp. 26 – 30.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 26 – 30.

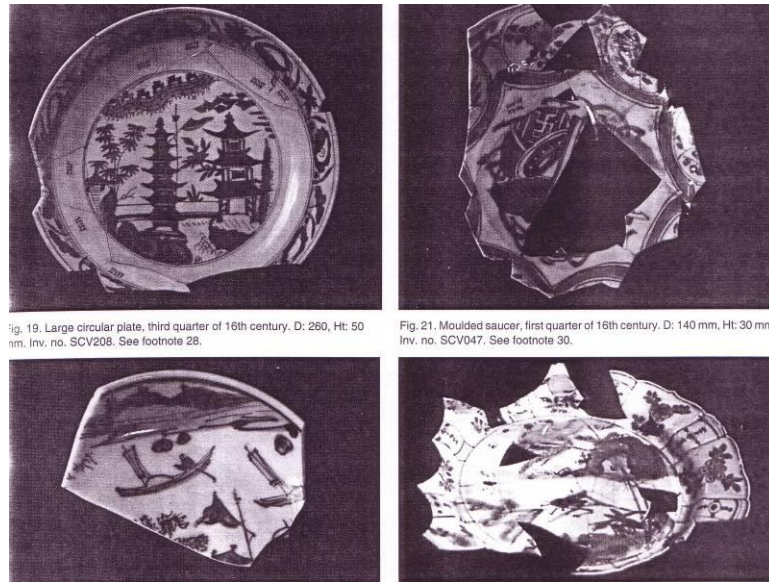


Fig. 19. Large circular plate, third quarter of 16th century. D: 260, Ht: 50 mm. Inv. no. SCV208. See footnote 28.

Fig. 21. Moulded saucer, first quarter of 16th century. D: 140 mm, Ht: 30 mm. Inv. no. SCV047. See footnote 30.

Fig. 4-20 Themes such as Chinese landscapes invoking picturesque scenes of life, architectural features and boats in porcelain excavations from Santa Clara-a-Velha, Portugal.

Porcelain is only one of the goods exported from China in the sixteenth century. Other Chinese artifacts such as textiles, lacquer work, silverware and paintings also poured into Portugal throughout the century. One port city in China is of great significance in connecting trading ties between Portugal and China because it became the principal frontier between economic and practical interests, and an intercultural center where technologies and ideas traveled. This city is Macao, which was known by the Portuguese by 1515, if not earlier, under the name Oquem or “Mirror of the Sea.”⁹¹

By 1583, the Portuguese were firmly established in Macao, partly thanks to the complicity of certain local officials but also due to the tacit approval of Emperor Wanli. It is recorded that “In Macao, the taxes and duties paid to the Chinese and Portuguese

⁹¹*Macao Scientific and Cultural Center, Museum Guide*, Macao Scientific and Cultural Center, Lisbon, pp. 33 -37.

authorities reached 27% to 28%, but the profit with the silk and silver trade made these voyages ‘the best and most profitable ever made...’” (*Livro das Cidades e Fortalezas* – Books of Cities and Fortresses, around 1582).⁹²

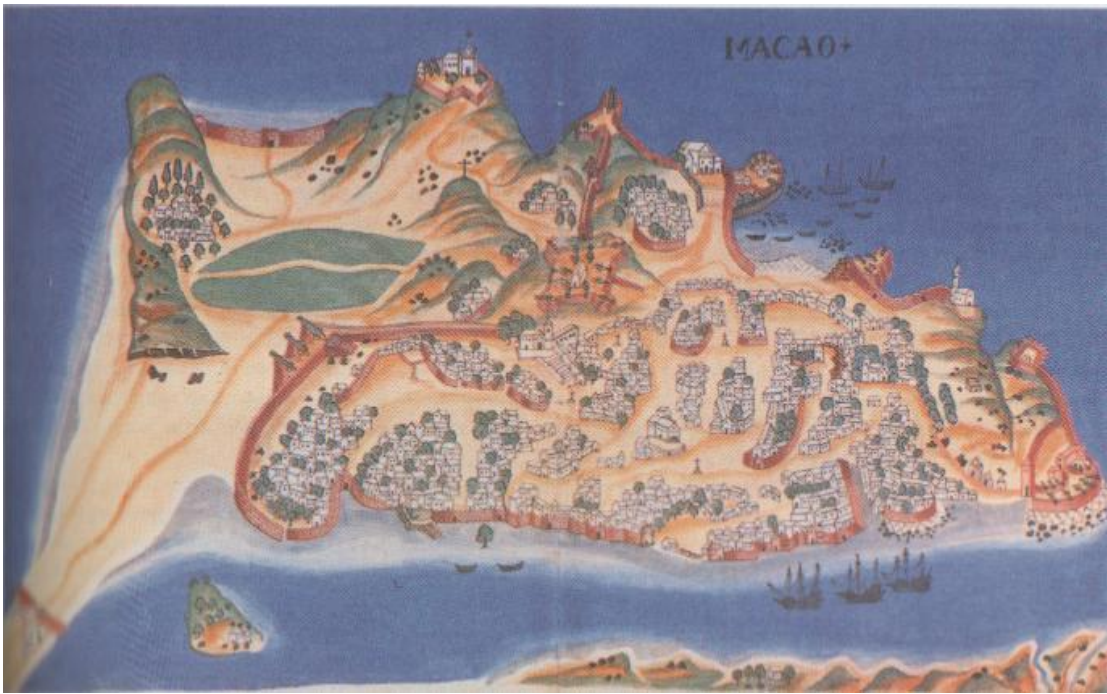


Fig. 4-21 Plan of Macao, *Livro das Plantas de todas as fortalezas, cidades e povoacoes do estado da India Oriental*, Antonio Bocarro, 1635

Owing to its special location and status (Loyal City in the seventeenth century), Macao served as a center for cultural exchanges. New ideas, interests and languages entered both China and Europe through the gateway of Macao. For instance, “the first

⁹² Edited by Rui Mateus Pereira and Joana Amaral, *Museum Macao*, Macau Scientific and Cultural Center Museum, Lisbon, p. 65.

dictionary of Chinese in a European language was produced in Macao in the 1580s.”⁹³

The vocabularies were mostly related to navigation, trade and politics, with predominance of everyday words and few erudite, technical or religious terms.⁹⁴



Fig. 4-22 *Dictionary Portuguese-Chinese*, c. 1582. The original belongs to the Society of Jesus Archive, Rome, Italy

The exchange between two cultures is also revealed in artifacts that were produced in Macao at this time. Fig. 4-23 shows a piece called the Saint Augustine jar, since it contains the symbols of the Augustinian order - two two-headed eagles over a heart pierced by an arrow, topped by a crown of five flowers. This belongs to a series commissioned by the Augustinians for their monastery in Macao, where they established themselves at the end of the sixteenth century.

⁹³ Ibid, p. 61

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 62



Fig. 4-23 The Saint Augustine Jar, Porcelain decorated with underglaze cobalt-blue, China, Ming Dynasty, c. 1580, Macao Scientific and Cultural Center Museum, Lisbon

After exploring contemporary literary resources on China and available visual resources, one question needs to be answered: what is the effect of these visual and literary sources? If we examine porcelains that were widespread in Portugal, we notice the tendency to blend Chinese decorative motifs such as vignettes of Chinese landscapes with Portuguese arms or religious emblems. The practice of blending the two clearly originated in designs commissioned in porcelain from late Ming Dynasty factories in China after about 1540. Figs. 4-24 and 4-25 are two examples of this type of porcelain.



Fig. 4-24 Porcelain bottle with four sides with two scenes alternated, linked to the mystery of the Redemption, showing elements from the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ, c. 1620. Dr. Anastacio Goncalves Museum, Lisbon.



Fig. 4-25 Kraaksporselein, bearing the coat of arms of Dom Joao de Almeida, Caramulo museum, 1575 – 1600, Wanli Period, China.



Fig. 4-26 Jorge Alvares' bottles, Ming Dynasty, 1552. Inscription: "Jorge Alvares had this made at the time of 1552," Lisbon, Fundacao Medeiros e Almeida, Caramulo Museum, Portugal.

Meanwhile, Portuguese inscriptions illustrated with Chinese motifs were also popular designs that were produced in vast quantities in China and circulated widely in Portugal, as Fig. 4-26 shows above.

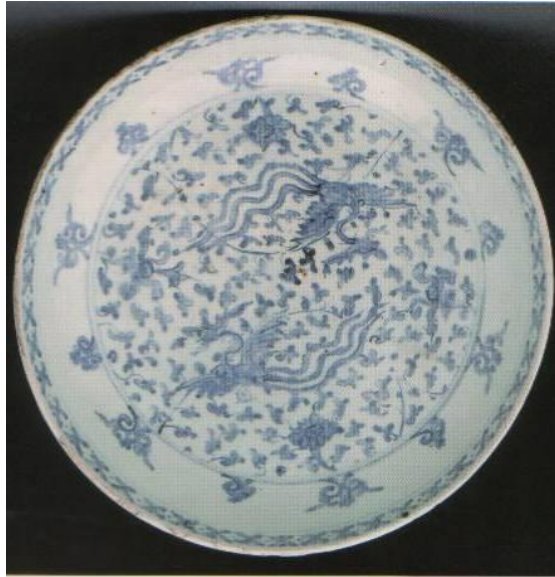


Fig. 4-27 & 4-28 Ming Dynasty, c. 1520 - 1540

Figs. 4-27 and Fig. 4-28 provide us with another example of a meeting of two cultures, decorated in grayish blue-and-white with Chinese decorative motifs on the inside – two phoenixes flying in opposite directions against a background of lotus flowers. While the exterior sides have five medallions (two of them bearing the symbol of King Manuel I), another has the Portuguese coat of arms. These widespread items

with Chinese decorative motifs or a mixture of both Portuguese and Chinese elements had a traceable impact on Portuguese art, which is most visible in an examination of the vocabulary used in Portuguese faience. Besides Kraaksporselein, Chinese birds and animals such as the crane, qilin (麒麟 in Chinese, a mythical lion-like beast) and lions began to be painted as the main subject in faience manufactured in Portugal from the first half of the seventeenth century. The tone of blue, also influenced by porcelain imported from China, is used in most of them.

4.3.1 Depiction of Chinese Symbolic Animals in Portuguese Faience



Fig. 4-29 Portuguese faience showing Chinese influence in the first half of the seventeenth century.

The plate in Fig. 4-29 provides another example of the imitation of Chinese Kraaksporselein in Portuguese faience. The juxtaposition of some symbolic animals, all

unrelated and scattered randomly in the center, reflects that a lack of deeper understanding of Chinese symbols was not a barrier to this kind of imitation.



Fig. 4-30 Portuguese faience, 17th century



Fig. 4-31 Chinese Kraaksporselein, 1575 – 1600, Wanli Period, China.

A rather grayish light blue tone is used in the plate in Fig. 4-30, as the genuine technique of porcelain manufacturing was still a mystery at this time. Comparing figs. 4-30 and 4-31 reveals some similarities in both composition and the usage of decorative motifs, while the plate in Fig. 4-31 arrived in Portugal about two decades earlier.

In addition to plates, Portuguese potters in the seventeenth century were also heavily influenced by designs from China. Thus bowls, jars and tiles, all of these using Chinese decorative elements, were produced.

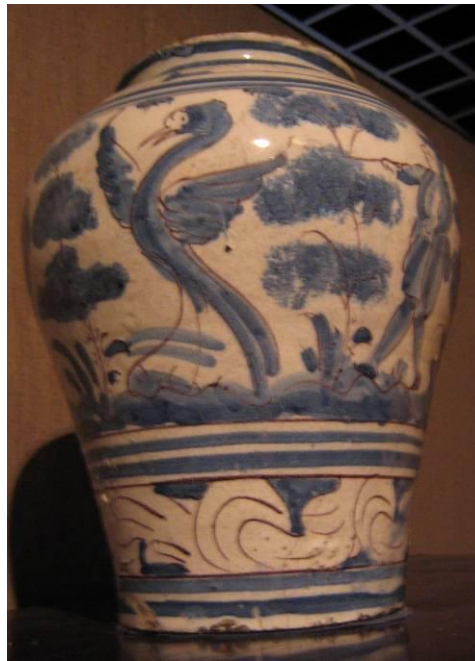


Fig. 4-32 Crane, Portuguese faience



Fig. 4-33 The mythical 'qilin,' Portuguese faience

As figs. 4-32 and 4-33 show, both the crane and the mythical qilin became the main subjects on jars produced in Portuguese faience. A soft purple tone is used in the plate in Fig 4-32 and the blue tone is maintained in Fig. 4-33. Both animals are enlarged and settled against a rather abbreviated background. On both jars, a species of animal becomes the main focus point and is located in the center, reflecting a change of view toward animals. Also noteworthy is the loss of symbolic meanings in the process of imitation. For example, the longevity which was believed to be symbolized by the crane in China was certainly missed when it was depicted on a large number of Portuguese faience porcelains, removed from its context.

4.3.2 Depiction of Chinese Architecture

Although not as popular as the Chinese phoenix or symbolic animals or flowers, depictions of Chinese architecture were also found on Portuguese faience in the seventeenth century.



Fig. 4-34 Portuguese faience of the 1st half of the seventeenth century

As Fig. 4-34 shows, Chinese pavilions with their curved roof lines became a decorative theme that was employed on plates, although probably owing to a lack of confidence in knowledge of the forms, the potters set them far back and hidden in rockery formations.

4.3.3 Use of Chinese Figures and Landscapes in Portuguese Faience

Besides Chinese architecture, symbolic animals and plants, Chinese human figures, usually with Chinese-fashioned umbrellas set against rockery landscapes, became popular motifs in the second half of the seventeenth century in Portugal.



Fig. 4-35 Portuguese faience plate of the 2nd half of the seventeenth century, Dr. Anatacio Goncalves Museum, Lisbon.



Fig. 4-36 Portuguese faience, 1620, Dr. Anatacio Goncalves Museum, Lisbon.



Fig. 4-37 Portuguese faience, 1620, Dr. Anatacio Goncalves Museum, Lisbon.



Fig. 4-38 Portuguese faience, 1620, Dr. Anatacio Goncalves Museum, Lisbon.



Fig. 4-39 Portuguese faience, 1670, Dr. Anatacio Goncalves Museum, Lisbon.

On plates shown in Fig. 4-35, 4-36, 4-37, 4-38 and 4-39, we have a glimpse of a general curiosity about China and its people, which is depicted with a not un-fairytale-like air. The freedom in treating these motifs, ranging from Chinese figures, flowers and birds, mingled with Islamic border designs, is also noteworthy.

In addition to the above-mentioned evidence, it is also worth mentioning that throughout the sixteenth century, commercial agents from other European cities were ready and eager to learn whatever they could about Portuguese successes in Asia in general and China in particular. As a result, the Portuguese reports, together with accounts of German and Italian participants in the early voyages, were widely circulated in Flanders, Germany and Italy, in both manuscript and printed versions. Fig. 4-40 shows a wall panel decorating a certain room in Lisbon which is later used in the Munich residence and in Toulouse, indicating a close tie between Portuguese art and that of other European countries.



Fig. 4-40 Flower basket, Attr. Gabriel del Barco, Lisbon, 1700

Meanwhile, Chinese paintings and other artifacts were also exported to other European cities through trade or given as gifts. It is recorded that Fernao Peres d'Andrade, a Portuguese who was in China from 1516 to 1517, returned to Portugal and showed King Manuel "several of their [Chinese] paintings and figures."⁹⁵ In addition, along with Portugal's greater involvement in the commercial and cultural interactions with other European countries in the sixteenth century, Portuguese merchants, sailors,

⁹⁵ From the translation of Osorio's *De rebus* (1571) in J. Gibb (trans.), *The History of the Portuguese* (London, 1752), I. p. 249.

students and artists became more influential in the cities of Europe. For example, in 1565, Bartolomeu Velho, a renowned Portuguese cartographer, offered his service to the French king as an expert in maritime matters “to show you those parts of the unknown lands which are of great importance and consequence.”⁹⁶ Other than directly official ways like this, Spanish and Portuguese of all walks carried news of the discoveries to other countries of Europe in their travels on various kinds of business. Among them, numerous scholars and scientists who traveled to and from Portugal actively broadcast news about the activities of the Portuguese in Asia and brought the information to other European political and cultural centers. Through such circuitous routes, much additional information on China and Chinese artifacts might easily be acquired in other European cities outside of Portugal.⁹⁷

Yet the picture began to change towards the end of the sixteenth century, when the Portuguese were forced to relax their control of the spice monopoly in Europe and it was apparent that Portugal lacked the resources necessary to compete with the Dutch and English East India Companies. The leading role that Portugal once played in assimilating and transmitting knowledge of Asia was taken over first by the Dutch and later by the English from the end of the sixteenth century onward.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Armando Cortesao and A. Teixeira da Mota, *Portugaliae Monumenta Cartographia* (5 vol.; Lisbon, 1960 – 62), II, p. 239.

⁹⁷ Change, T'ien-tse, *Sino-Portuguese trade from 1514 to 1644*, Late E.J. Brill Ltd., Leyden, 1969, pp. 109-110.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 129-141.

CHAPTER V: CHINESE INFLUENCE ON DUTCH ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Imagine a multidimensional spider's web in the early morning covered with dew drops. And every dew drop contains the reflection of all the other dew drops. And in each reflected dew drop, the reflections of all the other dew drops in that reflection. And so on and infinitum. That is the Buddhist conception of the universe in an image.

Alan Wilson Watts



Fig. 5-1 Petrus Plancius, map of the world, *Orbis Terrarum Typus De Integro Multis In Locis Emendatus*, 1594, Amsterdam.

If the sixteenth century was a century of discoveries and violent encounters, the seventeenth century witnessed both the emerging global mobility and the great curiosity in Europe toward the universe, which were intensified by the first hand knowledge and increasing demands for more luxury goods that were brought back through European travelers, merchants and missionaries. It is against this backdrop of growing demand for more international trades that the Dutch, traditionally able seafarers and keen mapmakers, began to dominate world commerce, a position which before had been occupied by the Portuguese and Spanish.⁹⁹

During the first twenty years of the Eighty Years' War (1568 – 1648), significant political and economic changes took place in the Netherlands. The fall of Antwerp on August 17, 1585 ended the Eighty Years' War for the Southern Netherlands. The loss of the Southern Netherlands caused many rich merchants of these cities to flee to the north. As a result, economic power shifted to the northern province of Holland, where Amsterdam became the most important city after 1585. Due to the peaceful nature of that time, Holland developed rapidly. And this rapid development of the economy in turn resulted in prosperity and an increased demand for luxury goods of all kinds, both from abroad and also domestically produced.¹⁰⁰ In this context, one of the first and most geographically influential world maps was produced by a Dutch astronomer, Petrus Plancius (1552–1622), as fig. 5-1 shows. This map served as cartographic encouragement to the Dutch crews as well as a landmark in the mapping

⁹⁹ Jan Daniel Van Dam, *Delftse Porceleyne Dutch Delftware 1620 – 1850*, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 2004, pp. 9-11.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, pp. 9-11.

of Asia and Japan. A key founder of the Dutch East India Company, Plancius drew over 100 maps and was very interested in the activities of Dutch crews in Asia.¹⁰¹

Eight years later, the Dutch East India Company, or the *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC), was established in 1602. Trying to circumvent the Portuguese monopoly, the VOC fostered trade with Asia and expanded Dutch economic power to compete with Spain, remaining an important trading concern for almost two centuries.¹⁰² After its formation, the VOC constantly sought to buy objects of the best quality to meet the demands of the home market. One category of goods that was in high demand was porcelain, and Dutch merchants shipped huge quantities of Chinese porcelain to other countries in Europe. “According to the records of the Dutch East India Company, 16,000,000 pieces of Chinese porcelain were shipped between 1602 and 1682.”¹⁰³

In addition, the wealth of the Orient and the enlargement of vision which had remained a source of wonder in Europe long before now were brought closer by the increasing accessibility to firsthand knowledge and growing availability of goods that were collected and displayed in more and more bourgeois families. As a result, the cabinets of curiosities¹⁰⁴ with objects from Asia gained much more popularity, and

¹⁰¹ 黄时鉴&龚缨晏, Huang Shi Jian & Gong Ying Yan, *Li Ma Dou Shi Jie Di Tu Yan Jiu* 利玛窦世界地图研究, Shanghai Gu Ji Chu Ban She, Shanghai, p. 68.

¹⁰² Glenn J. Ames, *The Globe Encompassed: The Age of European Discovery, 1500-1700*, Pearson/Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 2008, pp. 102 – 103.

¹⁰³ Wang Qingzheng, *Seventeenth Century Jingdezhen Porcelain from the Shanghai Museum and the Butler Collections*, Shanghai Museum, Shanghai, p. 45.

¹⁰⁴ For more on Cabinets of Curiosities see Susan A. Crane, *Museums and Memory*, Stanford University Press, California. 2000, pp. 67-68: “The phenomenon of the curiosity cabinet in Europe dates at least from the Renaissance. While elaborately decorated, portable *Schranke*, or cabinets, might house a special collection of valuables, the curiosity cabinet was a larger, immobile entity characterized by an interest in

influential books were published across Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries:

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, humanist scholars and their patrons increasingly favored the museum as a key site for a wide variety of cultural endeavors. Setting aside a room or series of rooms in their houses or palaces, they filled them to capacity with objects – books, manuscripts, paintings, sculptures, medals, scientific instruments, *naturalia* and *exotica*, the bric-a-brac of the learned world. While some museums were entirely private, created for the eyes of the collector alone, the majority enjoyed regular visits from princes, clerics, scholars, and curious patricians who publicized the qualities of these museums in their letters, travel journals, and conversations.¹⁰⁵

The Netherlands, which with its urban bourgeois and the VOC was the most powerful trading corporation in the seventeenth-century world, was certainly not an exception:

In the seventeenth century, with its ever-closer ties between the Eastern and Western worlds, the exotic element achieved a more and more prominent place in Dutch collections. The objects concerned hailed mostly from Asia and South America; those from Asia consisted primarily of Chinese and Japanese porcelain and lacquerwork... In the United Provinces large collections of Chinese porcelain distinguished the various

displaying a wide variety of natural and man-made objects in one place – the plentitude of the world represented in the microcosm of a single room or space. This small space was also often called a “museum...”

¹⁰⁵ Susan A. Crane, *Museums and Memory*, Stanford University Press, California. 2000; Paula Findlen, ‘The Modern Muses Renaissance Collecting and the Cult of Remembrance’, p. 161.

dwellings of the Princes of Orange in ‘De Oude Hof’ at The Hague. The Chinese material was, as we learn from an inventory of 1632, set out in tiers on shelves fixed to the walls, together with items from Avon near Fontainebleau. This was the customary arrangement, and was also to be seen in Rembrandt’s house in Amsterdam.¹⁰⁶

From the replica of Rembrandt’s cabinet at the Museum het Rembrandthuis (Rembrandt’s House Museum) in Amsterdam, where the rooms have been refurnished with works of art, furniture and other objects from Rembrandt’s time, we discern the keen interest that contemporary artists had in collecting and displaying items from the East.



Fig. 5-2 Part of Rembrandt’s collections, Rembrandt’s House Museum, Amsterdam.

¹⁰⁶ Th. H. Lunsingh Scheurleer, ‘Early Dutch Cabinets of Curiosities’ in *The Origins of Museums: the Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Europe*, edited by Oliver Impey and Arthur Macgregor, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1985, pp. 117 – 118.

Real artifacts are only one way through which seventeenth-century Europeans satisfied their curiosity toward Asia; along with booming trade, influential books were published as another source of first-hand knowledge on Asia in general and China in particular. For example, although the efforts to send several embassies to establish official trading agreements with the Chinese government failed, the trips nevertheless enabled the Dutch steward to the ambassadors, Johann Nieuhoff, to write his famous book entitled *An Embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces, to the Grand Tartar Cham, Emperor of China*. First published in Holland in 1665, the book gave to contemporary Europe a remarkably accurate account of China, which will be discussed in detail later this Chapter.¹⁰⁷

5.1 Influential Dutch Literature Introducing Chinese Art and Architecture

Along with the rising demand for Chinese artifacts, the demand for travel accounts increased as well. Starting with the fifteenth-century voyages of discovery, a rather impressive amount of information became available to European readers via Dutch ambassadors and Jesuits who visited China in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. After beginning with a brief introduction of China's history of emperors and their kingdoms, Nieuhoff describes Chinese architecture several times in his 1665 book, illustrating it with fine engravings. His text includes descriptions of architectural construction, with much more detail than has usually been acknowledged.

¹⁰⁷ Nieuhoff's book has been widely cited by scholars on Chinoiserie, such as Oliver Impey and Dawn Jacobson, and this thesis has more complete quotations.

On approaching the province of Quantung (modern day Guangdong), Nieuhoff notes that:

“At the entrance of the Harbour on the right side, appears a high Tower, built with great curiosity after the manner here described.”¹⁰⁸ (Fig. 5-3)

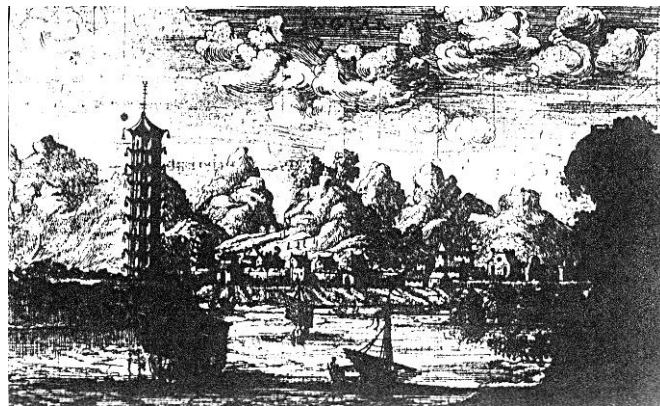


Fig. 5-3 A Tower in Quantung Province. Illustrated and described in Nieuhoff's *Travels*, 1665.

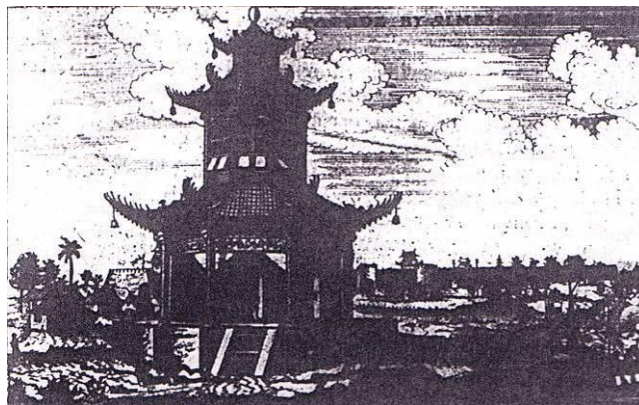


Fig. 5-4 Temple Illustrated and described in Nieuhoff's *Travels*, 1665.

¹⁰⁸ Johannes Nieuhoff, *An Embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces, to the Grand Tartar Cham, Emperour of China*, first published in Holland in 1665. Printed by John Macock for the author, London, 1669, p. 51.

Similar descriptions of several other temples and pagodas can be found in this book. A three-story temple near Tungchang is described as a rare masterpiece:

Within the Walls are several Temples, which are an exceeding ornament to the place; but that which stands without this city in an open field, exceeds all the rest for Bigness, Beauty, and Art. This Building indeed is so rare a piece, that we may well admire their wondrous skill in Architect, which they boasted of formerly. The whole fabrick consists of three rounds, the lower part whereof stands upon a Pedestal of stone, into which you ascend by steps; the place adorned with great Gates, and at each corner with most curious Pillars and Columns: The second Round has stately lights, and round pillars, by which the roof stands strongly supported. The third is likewise beautiful after the same manner; the whole building on the out-side is adorned with Fret-work, and at each corner hang little Bells. The inside of the Fane seems not so beautiful as the outward decorements of the walls thereof, being only hung with great and small Images.¹⁰⁹

Having devoted both Chapter IX and X to Chinese temples and pagodas, Nieuhoff further introduces the construction and materials of Chinese architecture:

This Empire is not altogether void of Architecture, although for neatness and polite curiosity, it is not to be compared with that in Europe; neither are their Edifices so costly nor durable, in regard they proportion their Houses to the shortness of Life, building, as they say, for themselves, and not for others ... in China they dig no

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 110.

foundations at all, but lay the Stones even with the surface of the ground, upon which they build high and heavy Towers; and by this means they soon decay, and require daily reparations. Neither is this all, for the Houses in China are for the most part built of Wood, or rest upon Wooden Pillars; yet they are covered with Tyles, as in Europe, and are contrived commodiously within, though not beautiful to the eye without...¹¹⁰

In addition, the porcelain pagoda of Nanking, a famous novelty building novelty which may have given rise to many pseudo-Chinese buildings built in Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is described as follows:

In the middle of the Plain stands a high steeple or Tower made of purceline, which far exceeds all other Workmanship of the *Chinese* on cost and skill, by which the Chinese have declared to the world, the rare ingenuity of their Artists in former Ages.

This Tower has nine rounds, and one hundred eighty four steps to the top; each round is adorned with a Gallery full of Images and Pictures, with very handsome lights (as in exprest in the annexed Print.) The out-side is all glazed over and Painted with several Colours, as Green, Red, and Yellow. The whole Fabrick consists of several pieces, which are so Artificially Cemented, as if the work were all of one piece. Round about all the corners of the Galleries, hang little Bells, which make a very pretty noise when the wind jangles them: The top of the Tower was Crowned with a Pine-Apple, which as they say, was made of Massy Gold.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p. 165.

¹¹¹ Ibid, p. 84.



Fig. 5-5 The Porcelain Pagoda, Nanking. Illustrated and described in Nieuwhoff's *Travels*, 1665

Another pagoda in Lincing, made of porcelain and embellished with various colors, is described in detail as well:

Without the wall, on the North side of the City, stands a most famous Temple, with a high Tower, exceeding rare in the manner of building: You climb up to the top of this Tower by a pair of winding stairs, which are not built in the middle of the Tower, but between two Walls.

The fashion or form of this Tower consists of eight corners and nine rounds or stories, each thirteen foot and a half; so that the whole height of the Tower is above 120 foot, and according to the height at a proportionable thickness: The outward Wall is made of the same mould that the *China* dishes are of, and full of Fret-work; the Walls within are polished Marble of several Colours, and so smooth, that you may see your face as in a mirror. The Galleries or Rounds, which are nine, adorning the Structure, are of Marble,

cut in Figures or Images, and have hanging at their Corners very fine Copper Bells, which then the wind blows amongst them, make a very pleasant jingling murmur.¹¹²

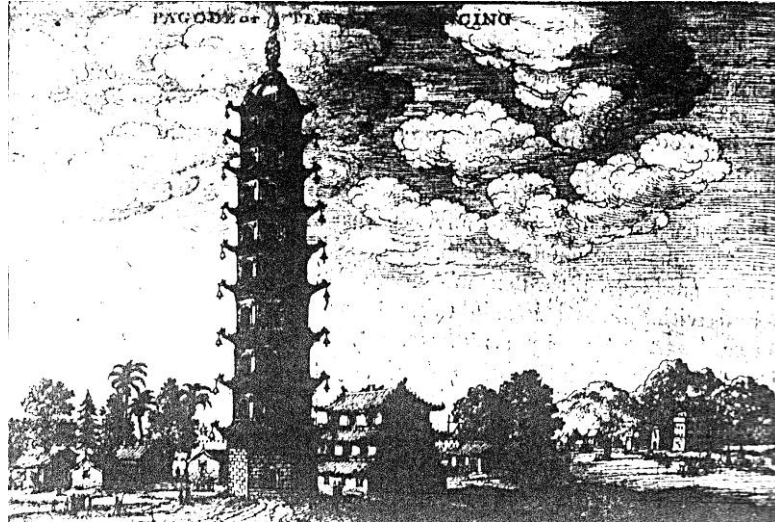


Fig. 5-6 Pagoda of Temple of Lincing. Illustrated and described in Nieuhoff's *Travels*, 1665.

Other than its possible influence on the later pagodas and garden buildings built in Europe in the eighteenth century, Nieuhoff's book also contains descriptions of extraordinary rock formations in China:

At a great distance before you come to this village, you see several Cliffs, which have been so wonderfully cut and ordered by Art and Labour, that the very sight thereof filled us all with admiration: but the last War has very much defaced the beauty of them, and you have now only left the Ruines, whereby to judge what a brave ornament they were formerly... In regard of the extraordinary strangeness of these Stone Cliffs

¹¹² Ibid, p. 104

made by Art, I drew one of them which had suffered least prejudice by the Tartars, and was at least forty foot in height, which you have here in the annexed Print; that so you may judge how the rest of them were contrived. The like Artificial Rocks are to be seen in the Emperours Court, where the great *Tartar Cham* often refreshes himself in the heat of Summer.¹¹³

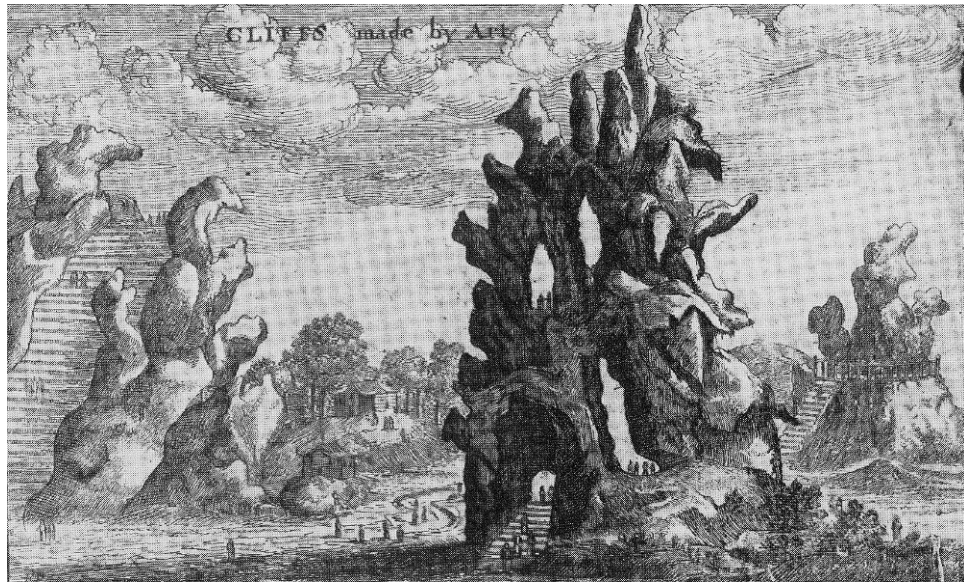


Fig. 5-7 Cliffs made by Art, illustrated and described in Nieuhoff's *Travels*, 1665.

There is not any thing wherein the Chinese shew their Ingenuity more, than in these Rock Artificial Hills, which are so curiously wrought, that Art seems to exceed Nature: These cliffs are made of a sort of Stone, and sometimes of Marble, and so rarely adorned with Trees and Flowers, that all that see them are surprised with admiration... These Artificial Mountains or Cliffs are commonly contrived with Chambers and Anti-chambers, for a defence against the scorching heat in Summer, and to refresh and

¹¹³ Ibid, p. 64.

delight the Spirits; for they commonly make their great entertainments in these Grots,
and the Learned seek to study in them rather than any other place.¹¹⁴

Nieuhoff's book was not the only one that mentioned Chinese architecture, garden design and city planning in detail. In *China Illustrata*, published in Amsterdam in 1667, Athanasius Kircher describes various voyages and travels undertaken to China, from that of Marco Polo until his own time. He publishes reports of Chinese regional studies, customs, architecture and geography, as well as the Chinese plant and animal world.

To better understand the man and his influence, the historical context is elaborated below:

As a reminder that not all scholarly cabinets – whatever their setting and however erudite their founders might be – were marked by monastic sobriety, no more eloquent illustration could be found than the museum established by the German polymath Athanasius Kircher (1602-80) at the College of the Society of Jesus in Rome. Building on a rather modest collection left to the College by Alfonso Donino, Kircher expanded the museum with foreign rarities sent back to Rome by missionary priests and by much scientific apparatus stemming from his own researches.¹¹⁵

Some illustrations of Chinese buildings can be seen in his book (Fig. 5-8 & 5-9).

¹¹⁴ Ibid, pp. 128-129.

¹¹⁵ Arthur MacGregor, *Curiosity and Enlightenment Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, p. 21.

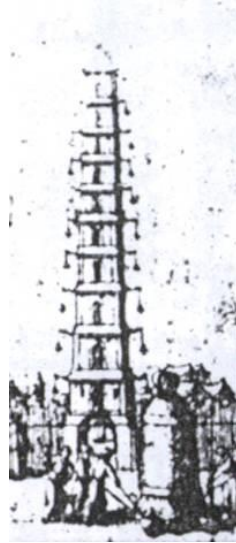


Fig. 5-8 Detail of Pagoda



Fig. 5-9 Engraving of bells in Athansius Kircher's *Antiques of China* with a background pagoda

When comparing the sizes of two ponderous bells, one in Peking and another in Erford, Kircher places a pagoda in the background in the annexed print, and it is possible to recognize the shape of the pagoda clearly from this picture. Although this pagoda is not clearly identified as the pagoda of Nanking from Nieuhoff's book, the image of this building was widely disseminated through the reprinting of Kircher's volume.

A much clearer illustration of a Chinese pavilion on the top of a mountain with an asymmetrical composition can be found in Arnoldus Montanus' *Atlas Chinensis* (1671), London, translated by John Ogilby. Here again, the picture shows a typical Chinese building – a pavilion that sits on the top of a rather artificial hill with a large arch over the middle of a river, through which we have a glimpse of the distant landscape. There are many trees covering the hill, with a huge one growing on the left side, the height of which echoes the temple above the hill.

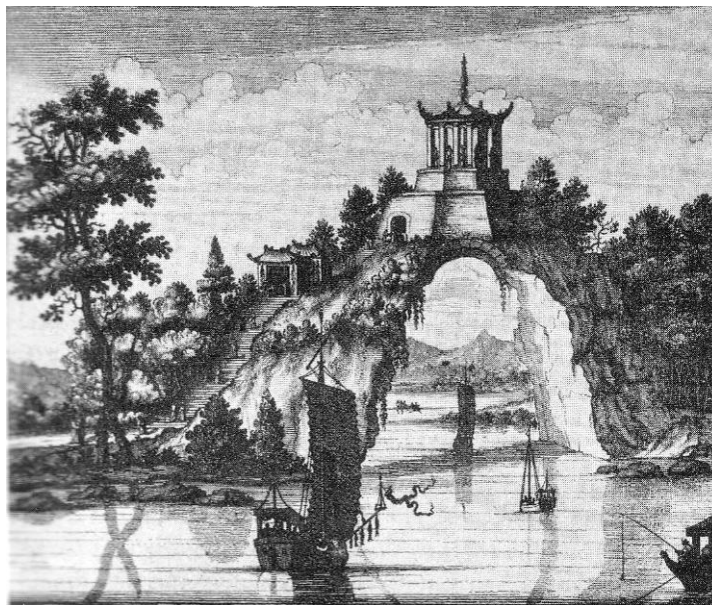


Fig. 5-10 Arnoldus Montanus, *Atlas Chinensis*, published in London, translated by John Ogilby, 1671.

Besides introducing Chinese art and architecture to a European audience, these books also served as rich resources for design motifs, especially for rooms that had an oriental theme. For instance, as figures 5-11 and 5-12 suggest, the wall hanging in Munich produced in 1700, now decorating the “Chinese Cabinet” in the Munich Residence (the 14th century building constructed by the Wittelsbach family who ruled

Bavaria for 800 years to 1918), shows a combination of Nieuhoff's Nanking Pagoda and Montanus' Chinese temple.



Fig. 5-11 Wall hangings, made in Europe around 1700, used between 1868 & 1944 to decorate a “Chinese cabinet” in the Munich Residence, tapestry.



Fig. 5-12 Wall hangings, made in Europe around 1700, used between 1868 & 1944 to decorate a “Chinese cabinet” in the Munich Residence, tapestry.

5.2 Importation of Chinese Porcelains and the Genesis of Delftware

As mentioned earlier, soon after Portugal lost its monopoly over Asian trade in the late sixteenth century, the Dutch defeated the Portuguese in 1602 and captured a ship laden with Chinese porcelain, which event announced the beginning of the Netherlands’ interest in trading with Asia. In the same year, the VOC was established under the protection of the Dutch government. Subsequently, the Dutch gained control of the lucrative trade in porcelains, spices, tea and silk, and among the artifacts brought from China, the blue and white porcelains soon became popular with the many royal

families that ruled Europe at the time, and the fragile and decorative pieces commanded substantial prices¹¹⁶:

In 1602, the Dutch East India Company started to bring Chinese porcelain to the Netherlands. At first the quantities were modest, but after about 1610 the volume increased year after year. By 1620, East Indiamen were bringing in around 100,000 pieces a year, all destined, it should be noted, for a wealthy group among the Dutch population that certainly numbered as many as 250,000 people.¹¹⁷



Fig. 5-13 Chinese bowl, c. 1600 – 1625. This blue-and-white porcelain bowl is decorated with Chinese motifs and was made for export to Europe.

Therefore, the porcelain dishes (as fig. 5-13 shows) that were used to decorate Portuguese palaces a few decades before became popular in Dutch bourgeois' families,

¹¹⁶ Jan Daniel van Dam, *Dutch Delftware 1620 – 1850*, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 2004, p. II.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, p. II.

and were put into domestic scenes on Dutch canvas by famous contemporary painters such as Johan Vermeer¹¹⁸ and Jan Steen, as fig. 5-14, 5-15 and 5-16 illustrate.



Fig. 5-14 and 5-15 (detail of 5-14): Johannes Vermeer, *Young Woman Reading A Letter at an Open Window*, c. 1657, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie, Dresden.

¹¹⁸ For detail analysis on Vermeer's painting, see Timothy Brook, *Vermeer's Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World*, Bloomsbury Press, New York and London, 2008, Fig. 4-14 is analyzed in "A Dish of Fruit," pp. 5-83.



Fig. 5-16 Jan Steen, *The Marriage of Tobias and Sarah (The Marriage Contract)*, c. 1673, Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco.

Among all these imported porcelains, certain common decorative patterns were landscapes, flowers and birds, scenes from plays and scenes from legends. It is worth pointing out that the poetic landscape on seventeenth-century porcelain was a successful transfer of landscape painting from a flat paper surface to a three-dimensional porcelain surface. From the Hatcher Wreck, a Chinese junk which sank south of Singapore just before the end of the Ming Dynasty, we find some representative pieces of porcelain that were imported to Holland at this time. Its cargo, from which about 25,000 pieces were salvaged, many in remarkably good condition, includes objects with cyclical dates corresponding to 1643, the year before the end of the Ming Dynasty.

Between 1604 and 1657, the VOC is estimated to have imported more than three million pieces of Chinese porcelain to meet the incredible demand. Portuguese

trading ships were called Kraak or caracca, and so Chinese porcelain soon came to be known as Kraakpoeselein in Holland.¹¹⁹ (illustrated in Figure 5-17, 5-18, 5-19)



Fig. 5-17 Kendi, porcelain, early 17th century. This Chinese wine or water jug is from the cargo of an East-Indiaman, the *Witte Leeuw*, which sank in 1613 after a skirmish with Portuguese ships. St. Helena. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

¹¹⁹ For further reference, see Rick Erickson, *Royal Delft, A Guide to De Porceleyne Fles*, Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 2003, p 10.



Fig. 5-18 Ewer & Basin, c. 1700, Rijksmuseum. Both ewer and basin were made in China for export. To meet the demands of European fashion the design was based on a European set made in silver.



Fig. 5-19 Ewer & Basin, c. 1700, Rijksmuseum. Detailed view of Fig. 5-20

With mass imports supplied by the VOC, porcelain became fashionable for people in all walks of life who could afford it in the seventeenth century. Because of the high demand for porcelain, the *Porceleyne Fles* in Holland decided to begin imitating

Chinese porcelain, which in turn led to the foundation of the famous blue Delft potteries.

Meanwhile, a war in China meant that imports of Chinese porcelain into the Netherlands, which had risen to something of the order of 250,000 pieces a year, declined between 1644 and 1647, and were to come to an almost complete standstill over the next five years. Seeing this gap in the market, the owners of the only two potteries producing faience in Delft seized their opportunity. They started to make faience on a larger scale with decoration in the Chinese style.¹²⁰



Fig. 5-20 Johannes Vermeer, *View of Delft*, 1660, Mauritshuis, The Hague. Delft viewed from the south. Most of the potteries were in the south and southeast quarters of the city¹²¹

¹²⁰ Jan Daniel van Dam, *Dutch Delftware 1620 – 1850*, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 2004, p. 18.

¹²¹ For detailed analysis of this painting see Timothy Brook, *Vermeer's Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World*, Bloomsbury Press, New York and London, 2008, pp. 10 – 15.



Fig. 5-21 Delftware, c. 1650 – 1660, an invented landscape executed in the Chinese manner, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

As fig. 5-21 shows, the decoration on this dish suggests some knowledge and understanding of Chinese landscape painting around 1650. The bird's-eye view of the whole picture and the mountains far away together contribute to the harmony of the asymmetrical composition. In addition, here we see also a depiction of a Chinese building which is covered by an overhanging roof, indicating an acquaintance with the typical forms of Chinese architecture.

The designs from those potteries are mainly borrowed from those of Chinese porcelain. The colorful majolica decorative was increasingly replaced with a design painted in blue on a white background, following the example of the Chinese style. The

birds and flower motifs are typical. Throughout the seventeenth century these patterns were combined with Dutch landscapes. Some of those motifs even migrated from porcelain decoration to other utensils such as candle-holders, teapots, and even violin and furniture themes, as shown in the following illustrations.



Fig. 5-22 Shoe, c. 1660 – 1675. Miniature shoes with floral motifs were popular items in Holland. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

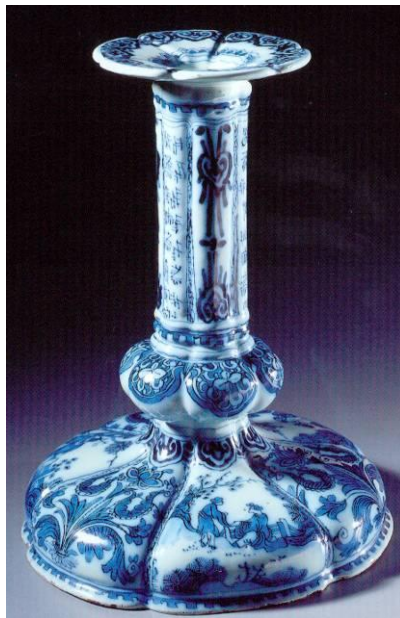


Fig. 5-23 Candlestick, c. 1680 – 1690, the pseudo-Chinese characters decorating the shaft of the candlestick are particularly striking, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



Fig. 5-24 Salt cellar, c. 1680 – 1690. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Fig. 5-24 shows a small salt cellar, and each lobe of which has a tiny individual landscape, a motif derived from Chinese porcelain dishes of the 1640s.



Fig. 5-25 Violin, c. 1705 – 1710. The blue-and-white delftware on this violin shows its popularity in Holland, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



Fig. 5-26 Jar with lid, faience, 1660 –70, Rijksmuseum. Foreign rulers often ordered such large showy pieces of Delftware. The style of painting was borrowed from Chinese examples. By scattering the pictures over the curved surface, without any connection between them, Delft artists were using foreign elements in their own interpretation.



Fig. 5-27 Dish, faience, 1660 – 1670. When the supply of porcelain from China was interrupted for a long period, the public bought this type of imitation Dutch Delftware. The painting is exactly the same as on the Chinese examples dating from the second quarter of the 17th century, but the material is somewhat thicker. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



Fig. 5-28 Delftware, of the type of that in Fig. 5-29, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

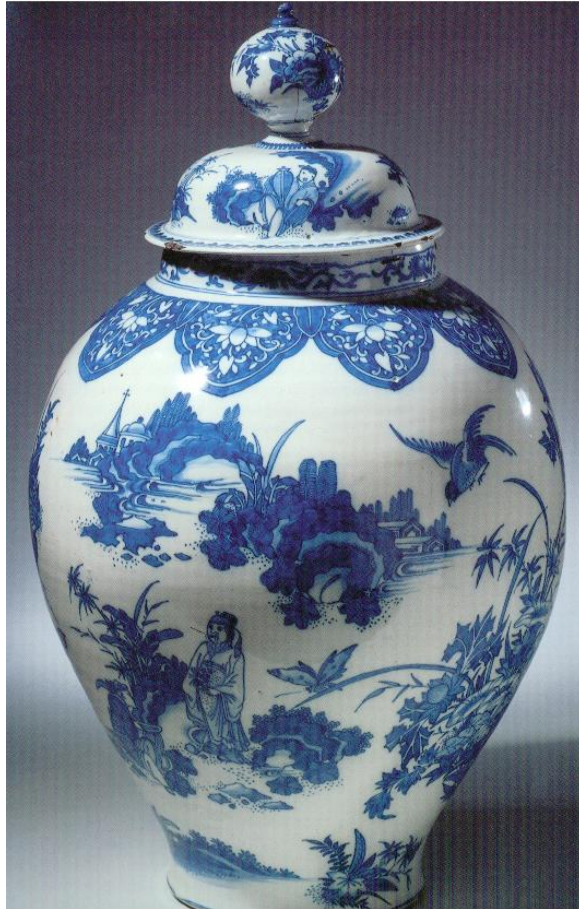


Fig. 5-29 Example of decorative vases produced in Holland in the late seventeenth century, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Alongside fine wares for use, magnificent decorative vases painted with exuberant and delicate Chinese designs were commissioned by many German and Scandinavian royal houses.

Other than decorative motifs that were borrowed from Chinese porcelains, the design of the pictures on Dutch faience began to reflect a new aesthetic taste similar to that of Chinese figure paintings. This is “the open, somewhat sparse painting

characteristic of the style of the De Metale Pot,¹²² made during the 1680s. As illustrated in figure 5-30 and 5-31, the designer has not placed the scene in the center of the composition, much of which has been left empty, giving the dish a particularly strong Chinese flavor.



Fig. 5-30 Faience, 1680 – 90, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

¹²² Jan Daniel van Dam, *Dutch Delftware 1620 – 1850*, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 2004, p. 18.



Fig. 5-31 Faience, 1680 – 90, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



Fig. 5-32 Spice jar with lid, 1680 – 90, faience, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Besides the porcelain that was used for decoration, spice jars in the Netherlands began to adopt the new look influenced by the Chinese vogue. Although

this type of spice jar already existed in metal, the first earthenware version did not appear until the 1680s.¹²³

Similar to the spice jars, dishes of different shapes fell under the same influence as well, depicting the Holland landscape in combination with Chinese flower prints.



Fig. 5-33 Small dish, faience, 1680 – 90. The shape of the dish – a leaf from a peach tree – was extremely popular in Japan. In 17th century China, large quantities of porcelain dishes were made especially for the Japanese market. This

Delftware specimen is a free imitation of such pieces, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

A new phenomenon in the seventeenth century was the decoration of interiors of stately homes with scented bouquets. Special flower vases were designed for the

¹²³ Ibid, p. 18.

purpose. In Delft, a pagoda model was developed consisting of successive tiers of faience water reservoirs stacked on top of each other, as shown in Fig 5-34, 5-35.



Fig. 5-34 Pair of flower vases in the form of a stacked obelisk, 1695, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



Fig. 5-35 Detail of the base of the flower vases in the form of a pagoda, 1695, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

5.3 Paintings and Interior Design

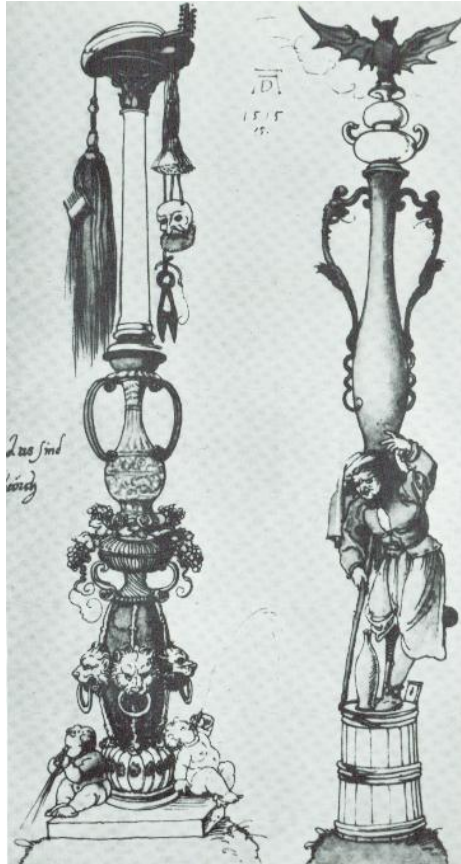


Fig. 5-36 Painting by Albrecht Durer, sixteenth century, Antwerp

In addition to the porcelain that had been imported from China and produced in Delft in the seventeenth century, there was evidence of the existence of Ming porcelain in Holland early in the sixteenth century. “Albrecht Dürer (1471 – 1528), the great German artist, was one of Antwerp’s most eminent visitors in the years of its greatest glory. He traveled in the Low Countries during 1520 – 1521... From his Portuguese and Flemish friends and acquaintances, Dürer, fascinated as he always was with new

ideas and objects, acquired a collection of curios.”¹²⁴ Based on his collections, Durer made drawings of two emblematic columns, which include fantastic vases that have been identified as Ming Dynasty porcelain, as fig. 5-36 shows.

As we stated before, besides decorating tables and serving teas, the collection and display of Chinese porcelain was fashionable in Holland, especially among the upper classes because they could display their collections in their “salons” as symbols of high social status and great wealth.

In his *Vermeer’s Hat The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World*, Timothy Brook points out that: “By the middle of the seventeenth century, a Dutch house was a house decorated with China.”¹²⁵ To have a house that was suitable for displaying China, the interior decorations of a room needed to reflect good taste and integrate all pieces of porcelain and furniture into a harmonious whole. And thus the style, spatial arrangement and the overall ambience of a typical contemporary Dutch house, when considered together, will tell us a more complete story of what was in vogue at the time.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Donald F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe, A Century of Wonder*, Vol. II, Book One, The University of Chicago Press, P. 17.

¹²⁵ For detailed analysis on this painting see Timothy Brook, *Vermeer’s Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World*, Bloomsbury Press, New York and London, 2008, p. 77.

¹²⁶ In *Vermeer’s Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World*, Bloomsbury Press, New York and London, 2008, p. 77, Timothy Brook points out that “By the middle of the seventeenth century, a Dutch house was a house decorated with China. Art followed life, and painters put Chinese dishes into domestic scenes to lend a touch of class as well as a patina of reality. ”

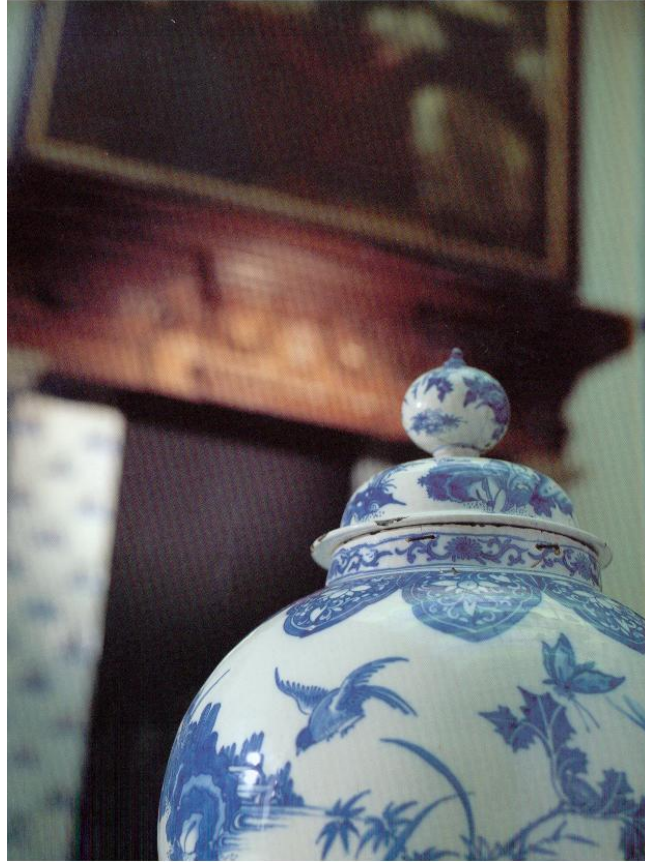


Fig. 5-37 Large vases used to decorate the salon, the principal room in a house, Amsterdam.

To better present these valuable pieces, certain changes in the design of wallpapers and furniture in Holland began to take place. For example, the following figures show the tendency of blending traditional religious themes with Chinese decorative motifs in furniture designs. As figures 5-38 and 5-39 show, Chinese landscape painting motifs are used on the frame of the painting in the middle, reflecting the taste for Chinese landscapes in upper class Holland.



Fig. 5-38 Copy of Ruben's painting "Nove Testamento" on which there are Chinese decorative motifs, Dr. Anastacio Goncalves Museum, Lisbon, made in the Netherlands, seventeenth century, first half.



Fig. 5-39 Copy of Ruben's painting "Nove Testamento" in which there are Chinese decorative motifs, Dr. Anastacio Goncalves Museum, Lisbon, made in the Netherlands, seventeenth century, first half.

A better example of the interior design in the salon that was popular in Dutch high society at that time can be found at the Van Loon Museum in Amsterdam, in which interior rooms date to 1672. As we can see from the following figures, many porcelain pieces were collected and displayed in this building. In both salons and living rooms, furniture depicting Chinese buildings began to appear along with wallpapers in

blue and white, matching the color of porcelains. In addition, Chinese screens with human figures and symbols contributed to a more harmonious atmosphere.



Fig. 5-40 Van Loon Museum, Amsterdam, 1672.



Fig. 5-41 Although the interior is not decorated with the blue-and-white porcelain which the Portuguese preferred in their buildings, the wallpaper in Holland began to follow the trend. Van Loon Museum, Amsterdam.

Other than the blue-and-white wallpaper, as fig. 5-41 shows, Chinese pavilions and flowers, along with the asymmetrical design on the chair below, all helped to create the interior design as an integrated whole.



Fig. 5-42 Furniture in the Van Loon Museum, Amsterdam, dated to 1672.

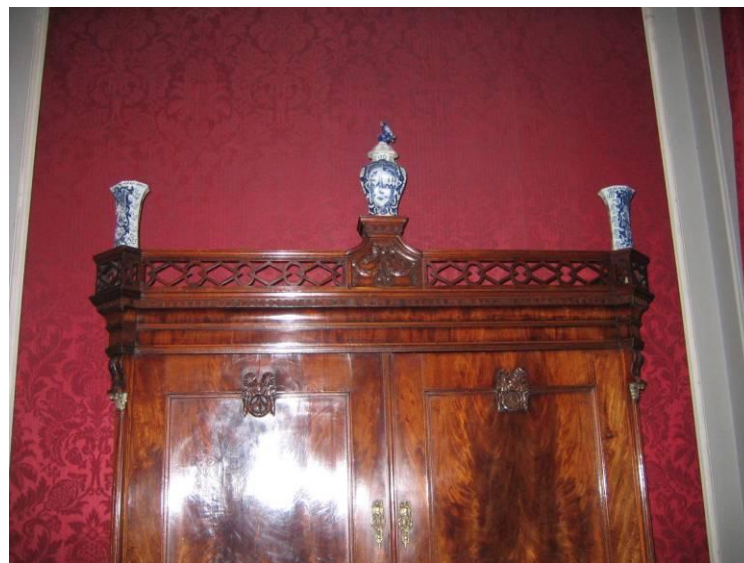


Fig. 5-43 Display of porcelain, Van Loon Museum, Amsterdam, 1672.

Needless to say, the display of porcelain and the screen with Chinese figures in traditional costumes together represent the wide popularity and appreciation for Chinese artifacts in Holland at this time.



Fig. 5-44 Display screen in Van Loon Museum, Amsterdam, 1672.

CHAPTER VI: EVIDENCE OF CHINESE INFLUENCE ON BRITISH ART AND ARCHITECTURE

*In a small compass, a model of universal nature made private.*¹²⁷

Francis Bacon

Following in the footsteps of the Portuguese and the Dutch, the English started their commercial and cultural interactions with China with persistence. The efforts of travelers and chorographers resulted in a vast production of manuscripts and printed material that increased as larger portions of the world were explored. As a result, there was increasing availability of literature on China for an English audience. Other than the books and artifact pieces that were given as gifts to Britain's royal family, direct trade between Britain and China began in the seventeenth century, making Chinese artifacts more accessible to people in many British walks of life. One company that played a significant role was the East India Company, an English trading company also called the English East India Company. Established on December 31, 1600, the English East India Company had been promoting trade mainly with India and China ever since. After the company was founded, the importation of porcelain gradually increased. Its novelty attracted the curiosity of the British people, especially the wealthy class. At the

¹²⁷ Bacon, *Gesta Grayorum*, p. 123. Bacon made fundamental contributions to the elaboration of a philosophy of collecting within the broader sphere of scientific research from the turn of the seventeenth century. An appreciation of the potential interest of collections emerges from his treatise on travel included in *The Essays or Counsels*, where travelers are exhorted to heed (and to note in their diaries) details of "Antiquities, and Ruines... Treasures of Jewels, and Robes; Cabinets and rarities".

end of the seventeenth century, Queen Mary II set the fashion of collecting China from Holland and from the Orient for decorative purposes. It is said that the queen was very fond of drinking tea in the afternoon, using a number of tea services, and that she enjoyed using Chinese vases to decorate the room with tropical birds and plant motifs.¹²⁸

The princely gifts, published descriptions and the royal family's tea-drinking habit all encouraged collections of Chinese porcelain in curiosity cabinets from the royal palaces [Charles I was an enthusiastic collector himself¹²⁹] to British houses:

In the late Elizabethan period Chinese porcelain was collected exclusively by those in court circles and a few merchant venturers. During the first half of the seventeenth century the volume of porcelain imported to England increased, and certainly much of it survives in the great country houses. Whether it was bought in England at this time or whether it was acquired in Holland or France during the enforced exile of Royalist families during the Commonwealth Interregnum or immediately afterward is impossible to say in the absence of records. It is quite apparent, however, that by the Restoration the acquisition of China had become a craze among the fashionable. In two of William Wycherly's plays, 'The Country Wife' and 'The Plain Dealer' (published 1675 and 1676, respectively), there are allusions to this pastime, of which certain aspects had gained a dubious reputation. In Charles Sedley's comedy 'Bellamira' (published 1683) one of the characters, Merryman, speaks of 'China-houses; where

¹²⁸ Rose M. Bradley, *The English Housewife in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, E. Arnold, London, 1912, p. 282.

¹²⁹ Arthur MacGregor, *Curiosity and Enlightenment Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2007, pp. 17 – 21. "In the only recorded expression of royal interest in curiosities – a request made on behalf of the East India Company for the supply of 'such varieties as are expressed' in an accompanying list (no longer extant) – the items concerned are to be delivered to John Tradescant, 'to be reserved by him for His Majesties pleasure.'

under pretence of Rafling for a piece of Plate or so, you can get acquainted with all the young fellows in Town.”

Defoe, writing at a later date and perhaps a little inaccurately of ‘China-mania’ as having been introduced by Queen Mary, observed, ‘the Queen brought in the custom or humours, as I may call it, of furnishing houses with Chinaware which increased to a strange degree afterwards, piling their China upon the tops of cabinets, scrutores and every chimneypiece to the tops of the ceilings and even setting up shelves for their China ware where they wanted such places till it became a grievance in the expense of it and even injurious to their families and estates’ (Rogers 1971).¹³⁰

In addition to the English East Indian Company as well as the collections in British country houses, an important institution was also founded in London in 1660 to remove language barriers within the sciences. Dedicated to the free flow of information and encouraging communication, the Royal Society attempted to establish a systematic method for the collection of information. One of its aims was to collect as many voyages as possible, including unpublished manuscripts. Furthermore, the society promoted translations of travel accounts and the publication of new ones.¹³¹ It is

¹³⁰ *The Treasure Houses of Britain*, edited by Gervase Jackson-Stops, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1985, p. 204.

¹³¹ Lydia M. Soo, “Reconstructing Antiquity, Wren and His Circle and the Study of Natural History, Antiquarianism, and Architecture at the Royal Society”, Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1989, pp. 73 – 82.

recorded that some of the fellows including Christopher Wren (1632 – 1723) and Robert Hooke (1635 – 1703) gathered huge libraries of voyages for themselves.¹³²

Meanwhile, more scholars and Jesuits were traveling between China and Europe, who brought first hand knowledge with them wherever they went. A Chinese named Shen Fu Chang who was able to communicate in Latin, for instance, had traveled to England and became known to the Royal Society. When he visited London, his portrait was painted by Kneller, as fig. 6-1 shows. He then left for Oxford, and it is recorded that: “When James II visited Oxford in September 1687, Shen Fu-Tsung was the subject of conversation at the Bodleian Library, where the sitter had apparently helped to catalogue the Chinese manuscripts.”¹³³

¹³² *Sale Catalogues of Libraries of Eminent Persons*, ed. D. J. Watkin, London, Marsell Publishing/Information Ltd. And see Parke-Bernet Publications, 1972 Volume IV for Wren and XI for Hooke.

¹³³ J. Douglas Stewart, *Sir Godfrey Kneller and the English Baroque Portrait*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1983, pp. 29 – 30, p. 129. The boy and couplet were mentioned at the society on 11 January 1688, *Journal Book of the Royal Society, Royal Society*, London, XII. Also see Lydia M. Soo, "The Study of China and Chinese Architecture in Restoration England", *Architectura: Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Baukunst/Journal of the History of Architecture*, Vol. 31, no. 2, 2001, p. 172.



Fig. 6-1 Sir Godfrey Kneller, *Michael Alphonsus, Shen Fu Chang, 'The Chinese Convert'* 1687, oil on canvas, National Portrait Gallery, London.

As in Portugal and Holland, Chinese influence on British art and architecture was not limited to literature but also left traits in porcelains made in England as well as in interior designs. Furthermore, although it is still an open debate whether Chinese landscape paintings in scrolls, books and on porcelains partly inspired or influenced the English landscape garden, evidence shows that Chinese landscape paintings and design principles were available in Britain at the very genesis of English landscape gardens. Osvald Siren argues that there is a kinship between Chinese landscape paintings and

English-Chinese gardens in terms of the intimate feelings for nature and the skills of dealing with her various elements.¹³⁴

6.1 Evidence in British Literature

The books by Nieuhoff in 1665 and Kircher in 1667, both mentioned earlier in Chapter V, were translated by John Ogilby (1600 – 1676) in England and made available for eager British readers in 1669 (second edition in 1673).¹³⁵ From this time onwards, these two books served as one of the primary sources of the written descriptions and visual images of Chinese architecture in Britain. It is also noteworthy that in the same year of 1699, John Webb discussed Chinese architecture borrowing information directly from the original editions of both Nieuhoff and Kircher.¹³⁶

It is in this context that John Evelyn (1620 – 1706), one of the key founders of the Royal Society, wrote on 13 September 1662 about the translation of a new account of China in a letter to Mr. Vander Douse, the “grandson to that great scholar [Janus Douse]”:

¹³⁴ Osvald Siren, *China and Gardens of Europe of the Eighteenth Century*, The Ronald Press Company, New York, 1950, pp. 15 -33.

¹³⁵ *An Embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces, to the Grand Tartar Cham, Emperor of China translated*, translated by John Ogilby, London, Printed by the Author at his house in White-Friers, 1673.

¹³⁶ John Webb, *An Historical Essay endeavoring a Probability That the Language of the Empire of China is the Primitive Language*, London, London, Printed for Nath. Brook, 1669, p. 116.

I have to the best of my skill translated your Relation of China: if you find the Argument omitted, it is for that I thought it superfluous, being almost as large as the text; but I have yet left a sufficient space where you may (if you think good) insert it. In the mean time, it would be consider'd, whether this whole piece would be to the purpose, there having been of late so many accurate descriptions of those countries [i.e. China and Tartary] in particular, as what Father Alvares Semedo has published in the Italian; Vincent le Blanc in French; and Mandelslo in high Dutch; not omitting the Adventures and Travels of Pinto in Spanish; all of them now speaking the English language. At least I conceive that you might not do amiss to peruse their words, and upon comparing of them with this piece of yours, to observe what there is more accurate and instructive; lest you otherwise seem *actum agere*, as the word is: but this, Sir, I remit to your better judgment.¹³⁷

As we can see from the above letter, translations of accounts of China from Latin, French or Portuguese were all available in England in the seventeenth century. The growing popularity of Chinese culture also gave rise to the first English play with a Chinese setting, namely *The Conquest of China by the Tartars*, by Elkanah Settle, which was produced in London in 1675. It relates in conventional tragic form the downfall of the Ming Dynasty, which had taken place a generation earlier.¹³⁸

Furthermore, John Evelyn also recounted his exposure to Chinese prints of landscape on 22 June 1664: “One Tomson a Jesuite shewed me such a Collection of

¹³⁷ John Evelyn, *Diary and Correspondence* (ed. W. Bray, 1862), III, Henry Colburn Publisher, London, 1850, pp. 137-38

¹³⁸ F.C. Brown, *Elkanah Settle His Life and Works*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, published 1910, p. 17

rarities, sent from the Jesuits of Japan and China to their order at Paris... Also prints of Landskips, of their Idols, Saints, Pagods...”¹³⁹

Later, in the first half of the eighteenth century, the most significant writer on China in Europe was probably Jean-Baptiste Duhalde. Two English translations of his *Description of China* appeared immediately, which served as rich resources of Chinese art and architecture. An example of his text will illustrate this:

They generally begin with erecting their Pillars and placing the roof thereon, because the greatest part of their buildings being of wood they have no occasion for laying a foundation low in the ground, the deepest is about two foot, they make their walls of brick or clay, and in some places they are all of wood...

In the cities almost all the houses are covered with tiles, which are half-gutters and very thick; they lay the convex part downwards, and to cover the chinks in those places where the sides meet they lay on new tiles in a contrary position.¹⁴⁰

Other than description of Chinese buildings, Duhalde's book also covers topics ranging from Chinese government, traditional costumes and public works such as bridges, triumphal arches, towers and city-walls, to Chinese furniture, lacquer-ware and porcelain.

¹³⁹ John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E.S. de Beer, 6 vols., Oxford, Clarendon, 1955, III. pp. 373 – 374 (22 June 1664).

¹⁴⁰ Duhalde, J.-B. (Jean-Baptiste). *The general history of China. Containing a geographical, historical, chronological, political and physical description of the empire of China, Chinese-Tartary, Corea and Thibet*. Vol. 2. London, 1736. 4 vols. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group, p. 144.

6.2 Evidence in British Visual Arts

After the 1520s a great number of Ming porcelains were brought to England and were regarded so highly that they were often embellished with mounts of silver or gold. These luxury pieces became more popular with the establishment of the English East India Company in 1600, while large numbers of porcelain pieces were exported to England throughout the seventeenth century. As shown in fig. 6-2 and 6-3, early porcelain like this was so precious that it was often fitted with metal mounts, and handed down in royal families.



Fig. 6-2 Wan Li period (1575 – 1620) blue-and-white porcelain bowl, which was presented by Queen Elizabeth I to her godchild, Sir Thomas Walsingham. Originally in Burghley House and now in Metropolitan Museum, New York.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ More detail of this bowl see *The Treasured Houses of Britain*, organized by the National Gallery of Art, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1985, p. 209.



Fig. 6-3 Cup, silver-gilt and porcelain. This porcelain dates from 1574-85, whereas the English mounts are ca.1585, Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Europeans prized Chinese porcelain in the 16th century. Collectors often added previous silver and gold mounts to these imported wares to heighten their importance. Porcelain bowls, flasks and dishes decorated in underglaze blue began to arrive in small quantities in England from the 1560s.

Between about 1600 and 1700, Chinese goods became more common in British homes. Large collections of porcelain were formed by the royal families and nobility. Porcelain was mass-produced and decorated in colors there for export. At first “blue-and-white” was popular. This was followed by a taste for enameled and gilded porcelain. As a result, there were many factories making blue-and-white and colored faience in Britain: Bristol, Lambeth, Liverpool, Southwark, and Dublin, to name only the largest. As Oliver Impey points out: “Here also a common demand for Chinoiserie

is apparent. Usually the painting is crude and simple, but sometimes, particularly at Liverpool and Bristol, the painters show considerable skills.”¹⁴²

Other than being directly influenced by Chinese design style, the British borrowed some of the shapes from their European neighbor Holland.

The Dutch influences at the time of William and Mary, reigning both in Holland and Britain from 1689 – 1702, must have been quite fashionable. For example, the chimneypieces at Hampton Court Palace were designed specifically to display Queen Mary’s Dutch Delft collection, and the huge floor-standing tulip pyramids at Hampton Court are rightly famous.¹⁴³

Thanks to the collection in the Victoria and Albert museum, London, we are able to examine some of the artifacts that were available to British families in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Fig. 6-4 is important because it has a landscape painting on it, which suggests the popularity of the motif along with its asymmetrical composition. In addition, the empty space at the top left is filled only with a design of birds, flying towards mountains.

¹⁴² Oliver Impey, *Chinoiserie, The Impact of Oriental Styles on Western Art and Decoration*, Oxford University Press, London and New York, 1977, P. 104.

¹⁴³ Rick Erickson, *Royal Delft, A Guide to De Porcelayne Fles*, Schiffer Publishing Ltd., Atglen, Pennsylvania, 2003, p11.



Fig. 6-4 Chinese mustard pot with European silver mounts, porcelain with decoration in under-glaze cobalt blue, about 1630 – 1645, London, Victoria and Albert Museum.

Porcelain became more popular in Britain in the early seventeenth century, and its function began to expand from tea-drinking to a wide range of other purposes. As fig. 6-5 shows, this salt dish has motifs of birds, mountains and plants, along with an exotic creature, all juxtaposed to indicate a sense of acceptance of Chinese decorative motifs in the early seventeenth century. If we take a closer look at both pieces, we notice that the compositions around 1620 in Britain share something in common – that the pictures and designs are filled with various kinds of motifs, be they birds, flowers or figures. This tendency of filling in all the space in paintings began to change in the following decade, reflecting an understanding and appreciation for empty space in contemporary Chinese landscape painting, as fig. 6-7 illustrates.



Fig. 6-5 Chinese salt dish. Porcelain with decoration in under-glaze blue, in the form of an English silver standing, about 1580-1620, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Fig. 6-6 Tankard with English silver-gilt mounts, porcelain with decoration in under-glaze blue, London hallmark on the mount, about 1630 – 1645, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Fig. 6-7 *River Landscape*, detail of a hand scroll by Fan Qi, one of the Eight Masters of Nanjing, 17th century, ink and color on silk; in the Museum of Asian Art, one of the National Museums of Berlin, Germany.

Along with the increasing number of artifacts imported to Britain from the 1630s, the pieces began to have more resonance with Chinese landscape painting, with more space left blank. As Fig. 6-6 shows, the composition consists of a Chinese figure with traditional costume while the background is left nearly blank with a small bridge over the lake at the far end.

These imported Wan Li-era porcelains inspired many blue-and-white designs, which were very popular in seventeenth century England. Among the various motifs, the most popular ones were Chinese figures with exotic costumes, landscape paintings, bird-and-flower paintings and rock shapes as fig. 6-8 and 6-9 show.



Fig. 6-8 Brislington, England. tin-glazed earthenware decoration in cobalt blue, c. 1680 – 90, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Fig. 6-9 English Delftware, posset pot and salver, 1685 and 1686, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Here a group of people in Chinese costumes are set in a landscape of rocks and foliage.



Fig. 6-10 Dish, porcelain with decoration in under-glaze blue, Europeans Making Music, from a print by the Bounart Brothers, about 1700 – 1710, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

More understanding and appreciation for the aesthetics reflected on Chinese porcelain gradually led to more freedom from faithful imitations. New elements were added in English delftware toward the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries. As fig. 6-10 shows, in addition to imitating the common motifs such as landscape, architecture and bird-and-flower from Chinese blue-and-white porcelain, daily activities such as making music in Europe became the focal point of the plate.



Fig 6-11 Liverpool, Britain, around 1724, punch bowl and cover, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

A more sophisticated piece that was made around the same time indicates a better understanding of Chinese landscape painting and better integration with the bird-and-flower painting. Fig. 6-11 illustrates a tin-glazed earthenware painted with Chinese landscapes. Comprising a large bowl and a three-part lid (the upper one being possibly for sugar), this piece is a good example of how well British craftsmen were able to understand Chinese landscape painting and represent it on three-dimensional porcelain. Also, the bird-and-flower painting is depicted with ample empty space. If we pay closer attention to some of the details, we discern that the motifs here are no longer strictly symmetrical, rather, they begin to be assigned with more flexibility in their replacement.

The wave of “Chinamania” and the use of decorative themes such as figures in Chinese costumes and bird-and-flower patterns soon spread from Delftware to other objects such as silver plates, as fig. 6-12, 6-13 and 6-14 show. British goldsmiths drew

their inspirations from a variety of sources including paintings on blue-and-white porcelain.



Fig. 6-12 Delftware, Monteith, tin-glazed earthenware, c. 1700 – 1710, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



Fig. 6-13 Monteith, silver, chased with Chinese figures, George Garthorne, London, 1684, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.



Fig. 6-14 Monteith, silver, chased with Chinese figures, London, 1689, Erddig, the Yorke Collection.



Fig. 6-15 Box, silver, c. 1680-1690. Cast and chased with figures in a landscape. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

In addition to engravings of Nieuhoff's travel account, a book published in 1688 by John Stalker and George Parker, *A Treatise on Japanning and Varnishing*¹⁴⁴ was another major source of Chinese-inspired decorative motifs. As fig. 6-16 and 6-17 show, decorative motifs consisting of asymmetrical flowers, exotic birds and Chinese figures were illustrated in the book, which not only gave recipes for imitating lacquer (as fig. 6-18 shows) but also provided patterns for the type of motifs to be used on silverware (as fig. 6-13, 6-14 and 6-15 show).

¹⁴⁴ Refer to John Stalker and George Parker, *A Treatise of Japanning and Varnishing*, 688, Alec Tiranti, London, 1688.



Fig. 6-16 John Stalker and George Parker, engraving in *A Treatise on Japanning and Varnishing*, 1688, London.

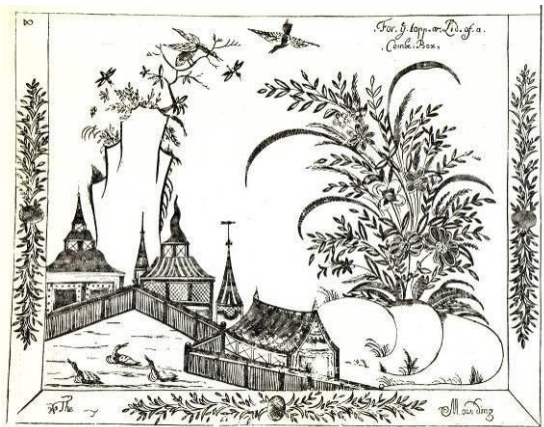


Fig. 6-17 John Stalker and George Parker, engraving in *A Treatise on Japanning and Varnishing*, 1688, London.



Fig. 6-18 Cabinet on stand, c. 1690, English, softwood, japed, with polished brass hinges and lockplate, on a silvered limewood stand, Athelhampton, Sir Robert Cooke.

Fig. 6-18, the Athelhampton cabinet, is an example of high quality late seventeenth century British lacquer furniture. Decorated with Chinese architecture and scenery very similar with Stalker and Parker's engraving, this cabinet was "used in bedchambers and dressing rooms where their many drawers were useful for keeping valuable small objects and jewelry. They were also invariably surmounted by a garniture of large porcelain, or occasionally even silver vases: hence their undecorated and somewhat abrupt, fat tops."¹⁴⁵ In addition to enriching decorative motifs in furniture and silverware, would Chinese landscape painting depicted in fig. 6-18 have

¹⁴⁵ *The Treasure Houses of Britain*, edited by Gervase Jackson-Stops, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1985, p. 198.

had any influence in real British gardens? To answer the question we first turn to available resources.

6.3 The Influence of China on English Landscape Gardens:



Fig. 6-19 Dish, porcelain painted in underglaze blue with a mountainous landscape, China, Qing Dynasty, Kangxi period, 1662-1722, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Based on all available resources in both literary and visual evidence (i.e. depicted on blue-and-white porcelain as fig. 6-19 illustrates) mentioned above, it is not surprising to see that as early as 1685, famous British literati advocated the application of Chinese landscape painting from porcelains to real gardens.

One of the leading proponents, and the most influential one, was Sir William Temple, whose essay *Upon Heroick Virtue* [1685] criticized formal gardens and their ‘designed proportions, symmetries, or uniformities.’ Regarding irregular forms as more beautiful, Temple used the term *sharawadgi* to emphasize his appreciation of the studied beauty of irregularity (without order):

What I have said of the best forms of gardens is meant only of such as are in some sort regular; for there may be other forms wholly irregular, that may, for aught I know, have more beauty than any of the others; but they must owe it to some great race of fancy or judgment in the contrivance, which may reduce many disagreeing parts into some figure, which shall yet upon the whole be very agreeable. Something of this I have seen in some places, but heard more of it from others who have lived among the Chinese, a people whose way of thinking seems to lie as wide of ours in Europe, as their country does. Among us, the beauty of building and planting is placed chiefly in some certain proportions, symmetries, or uniformities; our walks and our trees ranged so as to answer one another, and at exact distances. The Chinese scorn this way of planting, and say a boy than can tell an hundred may plant walk of trees in straight lines, an over against one another, and what length and extent he pleases. But their greatest reach of imagination is employed in contriving figures, where the beauty shall be great, and strike the eye, but without any order or disposition of parts that shall be commonly or easily observed: and though we have hardly any notion of this sort of beauty, yet they have a particular word to express it, and where they find it hit their eye at first sight, they say the *sharawadgi* is fine or is admirable, or any such expression of esteem. And

whoever observes the work upon the best India gowns, or the painting upon their best screens or porcelains, will find their beauty is all of this kind (that is) without order.¹⁴⁶

Considering the popularity of Chinese porcelains that were available in Britain at this time, it was natural for Temple to exemplify the Chinese aesthetic taste of “Sharawadgi” via “the painting upon their best screens or porcelains.”¹⁴⁷ The importance of Temple’s essay and the dissatisfaction he expressed cannot be over-emphasized. Nikolaus Pevsner points out that Temple’s use of the term “Sharawadgi,” to symbolize irregular beauty, is the first suggestion of a beauty fundamentally different from the formal aesthetic ideology:

It was left to the English, Temple first, and Shaftsbury, Addison and Pope later, to apply the doctrine of simple nature to the garden. Nature in her original state is not regular in the Le Notre sense, nobody could really insist on that, once it had been pointed out, and so Sir William Temple added that remarkable passage about Sharawadgi... Its significance in its own day was at least as great. It is the first suggestion of a possible beauty fundamentally different from the formal, a beauty of irregularity and fancy.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ William Temple, “Upon the Garden of Epicurus,” 1685, in *Five Miscellaneous Essays by Sir William Temple*, The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1963, pp. 29-30. This citation is also discussed by several other scholars such as Eleanor von Erdberg, *Chinese Influence on European Garden Structures*, Cambridge, 1936, New York, Hacker, 1985; Hugh Honour, *Chinoiserie: the Vision of Cathay*, New York, Harper and Row, 1961, pp. 143 – 163; Oliver Impey, *Chinoiserie: the Impact of Oriental Styles on Western Art and Decoration*, New York, Scribner, 1977, pp. 142 – 159; Patrick Conner, *Oriental Architecture in the West*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1979, pp. 26 – 84; Dawn Jacobson, *Chinoiserie*, Phaidon Press Ltd., London, 1993, pp. 152 – 155.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, pp. 152 – 155.

¹⁴⁸ Nikolaus Pevsner, “The Genesis of The Picturesque”, *Architectural Review*, 1944, p. 140.

In 1712, Joseph Addison reinforced Temple's statement by praising Chinese gardens in *The Spectator* as free of artificial geometrical qualities. From the same essay one can also gain a sense of how the English used to associate the irregular gardens with the Chinese at that time:

Writers, who have given us an Account of China, tell us the Inhabitants of that country laugh at the Plantations of our *Europeans*, which are laid by the Rule and Line; because, they say, any one may place Trees in equal Rows and uniform Figures, They chuse rather to shew a Genius in Works of this Nature, and therefore always conceal the Art by which they direct themselves. They have a Word it seems in their language, by which they express the particular Beauty of Plantation that thus strikes the Imagination at first Sight, without discovering what it is that has so agreeable an Effect. Our British Gardeners, on the contrary, instead of humouring Nature, love to deviate from it as much as possible, Our Trees rise in Cones, Globes, and Pyramids. We see the Marks of the Scissars upon every Plant and Bush. I do not know whether I am singular in my Opinion, but, for my own part, I would rather look upon a Tree in all its Luxuriancy and Diffusion of Boughs and Branches, than when it is thus cut and trimmed into a Mathematical Figure; and cannot but fancy that an Orchard in Flower looks infinitely more delightful than all the little Labyrinths of the most finished Parterre.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ Joseph Addison, Richard Steele, and others, *The Spectator*, edited by G. Gregory Smith, E.P. Dutton, 1909, Vol.3, p. 68 (No. 414, June 25, 1712); this citation is also discussed by Down Jacobson, *Chinoiserie*, Phaidon Press Ltd., London, 1993, pp. 152 - 155; Patrick Conner, *Oriental Architecture in the West*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1979, pp. 26 - 84.

In addition to the appreciation for Chinese beauty of irregularity and artful informality, illustrations of Chinese landscape and gardens that were available in Britain further disseminated this aesthetic style into ready minds. The question of whether the “naturalistic” gardens in England were inspired by Chinese landscape painting or other Chinese asymmetrical designs has been long debated and never conclusively answered. While many eighteenth-century writers credit Chinese gardens with shaping English landscape gardens, others disagree. Although it is impossible to give a definite answer, we can certainly gain a better judgment by considering the resources of Chinese architecture and gardens that were available in Europe in the early eighteenth century.

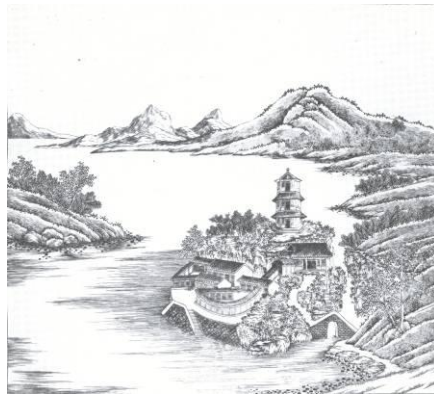


Fig. 6-20 The Imperial Gardens at Jehol, engraving by Matteo Ripa, 1713.

It is true that as early as in 1713, the Italian priest Father Matteo Ripa, who was attached to the mission to the Chinese Court between 1711 and 1723, brought 36 views of the newly erected imperial gardens at Jehol into Europe upon his return in 1724. Ripa spent some time in London and created quite a stir in the Burlington circle. Rudolf Wittkower argues that these engravings contributed to the origin of the English

landscape garden (figures 6-20 & 6-21): “This is significant because the copy reached Burlington at a decisive moment – when William Kent (his close collaborator) began to plan the first important semi-natural garden for Burlington’s Chiswick villa.”¹⁵⁰



Fig. 6-21 The Imperial Gardens at Jehol, engraving by Matteo Ripa, 1713.

Wittkower’s statement is echoed by the French word “Jardins Anglo-Chinois,” a mixture of the terms “English,” “Chinese,” and “Landscape” garden. Furthermore, Isaac Ware, in a short chapter of his great work on architecture, pays China homage as the creator of the pure landscape garden.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Rudolf Wittkower, “China and Europe II: Chinoiserie and the Anglo-Chinese Garden”, *The Impact of Non-European Civilizations on the Art of the West*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York, 1989, P. 189.

¹⁵¹ Refer to Isaac Ware, *A Complete Body of Architecture*, London: printed for J. Rivington, L. Davis and C. Reymers, R. Baldwin [and 4 others in London], 1756, pp 645-646.

As stated above, the appreciation for things Chinese in Britain was brought to such a level that it was not long restricted to the art arena. For instance, John Webb once advocated learning from the Chinese system of government. It is seeing from this political angle and understanding its implications that enables Wittkower to argue that Chinese landscape gardening was instrumental in the genesis of English landscape gardens, based on the parallel of Chinese civilization with the Roman one. Wittkower believes that Chinese artifacts and landscape paintings not only inspired the British taste toward a more informal beauty, but also to visualize a civilization which set its citizens free through providing different approaches to nature:

Informal gardens had existed before, in two widely separate civilizations which, according to early eighteenth-century interpreters, were both governed by wise, just and temperate rulers for the benefit of the common people, namely republican Rome and China. It seems that in Burlington's circle these guides to a free man's relation to nature were as carefully explored as was possible in those days....

Although Kent's landscape garden sketches for Chiswick – of which some survive – are, of course, typically English, the Chinese testimony surely carried enormous weight. In Ripa's engravings there was visual proof of nature moulded by a society that had – one believed – realized Plato's utopia of a state ruled by philosophical principles. It appeared that republican Rome and China revealed the same truth. Both civilizations taught the same lesson regarding their approach to nature. And since Chinese gardens

could now be studied, at least in prints, they implicitly testified to the character of Roman gardens, which could only tentatively be reconstructed from literary sources.¹⁵²

Thus the adoption of a Chinese way of design in English landscape gardening is two-fold: to create a place reminiscent of the character of Roman gardens and to implement a new aesthetic of informal beauty.

It is then not surprising to see that almost at the same time Alexander Pope expressed similar ideas about replacing part of his geometrical garden at Twickenham with a much more asymmetrical lay out. (Fig. 6-22) As fig 6-22 shows, although the whole garden is still dominated by the main axis, several winding paths began to add more variety and wilderness to the plan.

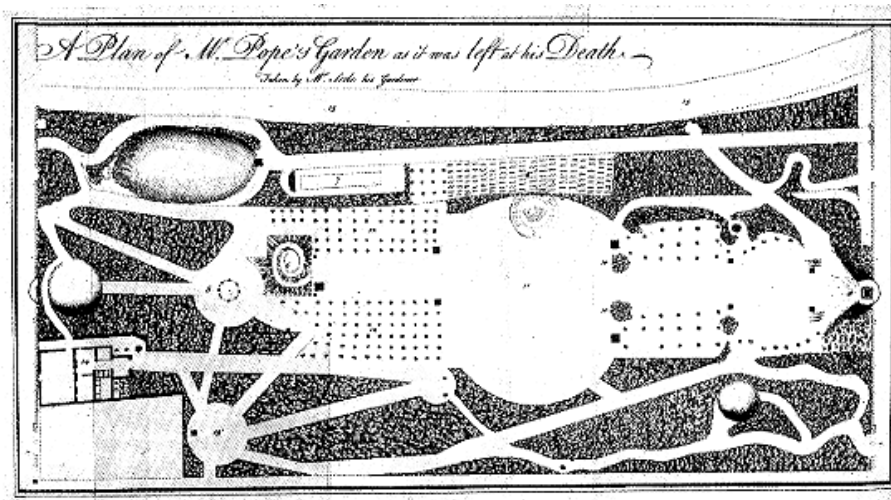


Fig. 6-22 Engraving by J. Serle, Alexander Pope's Garden at Twickenham, 1725.

¹⁵² Rudolf Wittkower, *Palladio and English Pallasianism*, Thames and Hudson, New York, first ed. 1983, reprinted 1989, pp. 184 – 186.

6.4 Evidence in British Interior Design

Meanwhile, more and more British country houses began to have tapestries, wooden cabinets and lacquered furniture decorated in Chinese-inspired motifs, all of which were arranged carefully to accentuate the voluptuous convexity of the porcelain jars and dishes. It was fashionable to display porcelain vases, teacups and plates in appropriate positions and match them with wall hangings in the room, which all contributed to a new synthesis in interior design. Fig. 6-23 is one puzzle of the picture.



Fig. 6-23 Chair, c. 1673, English, Japanned beech, Ham House, the Trustees of the Victorial and Albert Museum, London. (It is recorded that there were over forty items of lacquered or japanned furniture listed at Ham in 1637.¹⁵³)

¹⁵³ *The Treasure Houses of Britain*, edited by Gervase Jackson-Stops, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1985, p. 164.

Exotic lacquer and Japanned furniture were considered suitable for fashionable bedroom apartments in the late seventeenth century. This chair may be one of a set of six, *en suite* with a table, recorded in the Duchess' Private Closet in 1677 and described again two years later as having 'cane bottoms' and being *en suite* with a 'table painted black and gold.' They also appear in the 1682 inventory as 'six Japan'd backstools with cane bottoms,' and with 'cusheons,' which matched the wall hangings of the room. As well as a tea table, the closet contained a 'Japan box for sweetmeats and tea,' so the 'Chinoiserie' chairs would have been particularly appropriate for use when the Duchess entertained friends to tea served in Chinese porcelain.¹⁵⁴

Considering the fact that the English country houses were not only a place for family gatherings but also for sharing collections,¹⁵⁵ we will see more signs of the contemporary British taste from the few examples of interior designs in country houses below.

Along with the trend of collecting porcelain and matching wall-hangings, the tapestry in Chinoiserie motifs began to be in vogue as well. It is recorded that "In 1690, John Vanderbank, yeoman arras maker to King William III, delivered a set of four Chinoiserie tapestries to be installed at Kensington Palace for the sum of £495."¹⁵⁶ (Fig. 6-24 and 6-25 show)

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ *The Treasure Houses of Britain*, edited by Gervase Jackson-Stops, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1985, P. 10, J. Carter Brown, 'Introduction': "The English country house was, and is, the background of political life, for agriculture and sport (those twin passions of the English squire), for the social round of country balls and family gatherings, and, above all, for collecting."

¹⁵⁶ Edith Appleton Standen, 'English Tapestries "after the Indian Manner."' *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 15, 1981, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Fig. 6-24 Chinoiserie Tapestry from the Soho workshops of John Vanderbank, The Vyne, Hampshire. Courtesy of The National Trust.

We know that tapestries of this kind were woven in sets to cover the walls of entire rooms and were intended to be appreciated together as sets.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ *The Treasure Houses of Britain*, edited by Gervase Jackson-Stops, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1985, P. 8, J. Carter Brown, 'Introduction'.

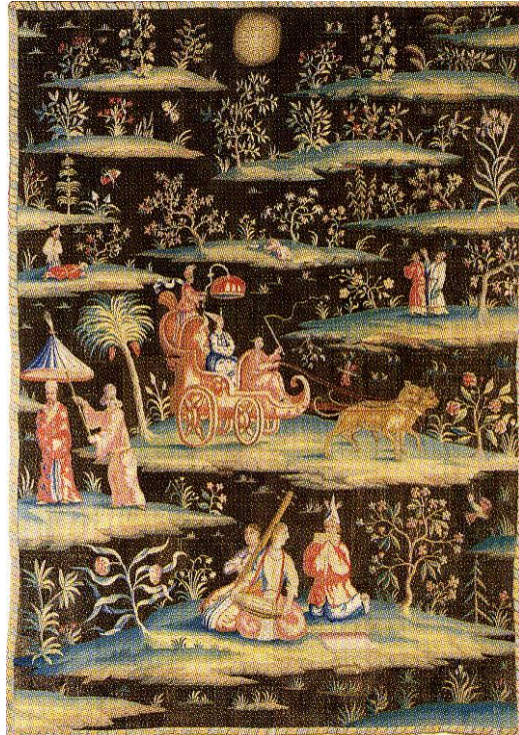


Fig. 6-25 Attributed to John Vanderbank (1689-1717), tapestry, English, Soho, c. 1700.

In addition to covering the wall with Chinoiserie tapestries, the paneled walls of this English room started to be filled with Chinese motifs as well. Drayton House, for instance, shows a lacquer screen cut up to provide brilliantly colored paneling (as fig. 6-26 shows).



Fig. 6-26 Cabinet des lacquer de Drayton House, c.1700, Drayton House, Lowick, Kettering (Britain), Collection of Charles Stopford Sackville.

As stated above, the interior design of British country houses in the early eighteenth centuries began to show the tendency of integrating all furniture into a harmonious whole. In these Chinese-inspired rooms, the screens, panels, tapestries and lacquer furniture were grouped together to provide the right ambience for the collections of Chinese porcelain.

This trend was not new in other European countries, especially France. Three decades earlier, the Trianon de Porcelains was built in Versailles to satisfy the king's desire to have a Chinese-style building in his own garden, which will be discussed in more detail below, in Chapter VII.

CHAPTER VII: CHINESE INFLUENCE ON FRENCH ART AND ARCHITECTURE

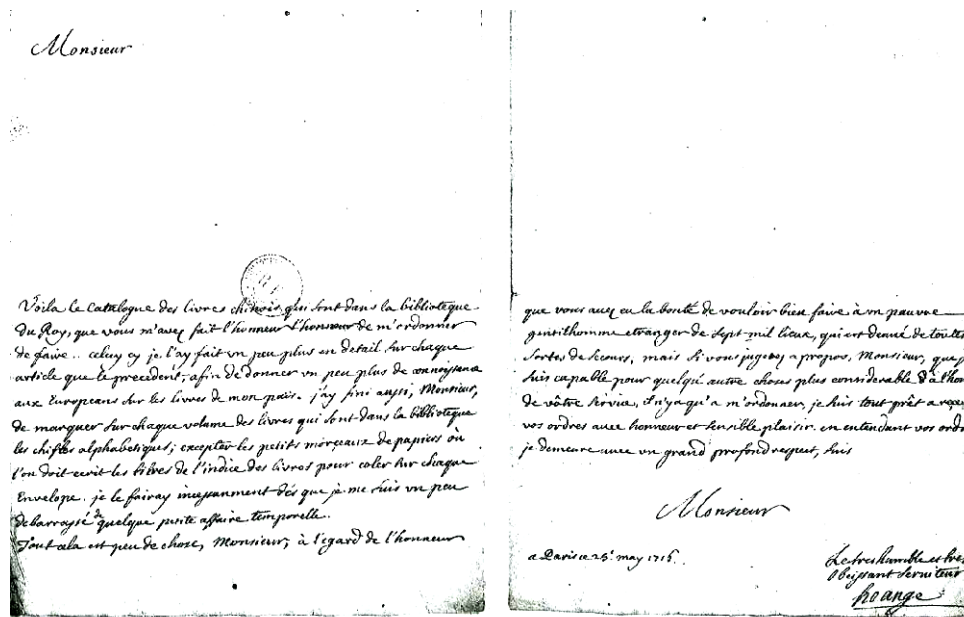


Fig. 7-1 Letter of Arcade Hoange presenting his accomplishment of organizing Chinese catalogue manuscripts in 1716, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Department of Manuscripts.¹⁵⁸

The catalogue of the Chinese books is now compiled in the Bibliothèque du Roy (King's Library). Per your request, I was honored to organize them and add a little more detail on every article than the precedent, and to offer a little more expertise on

¹⁵⁸ For more on this manuscript see Nathalie Monnet, 'Les Livres Chinois de Louis XIV', *Kangxi Empereur de Chine 1662-1772 : La Cité interdite à Versailles*, Musée National du Château de Versailles, 27 Janvier – 9 Mai 2004, Réunion des Musée Nationaux, Paris, 2004, p. 213.

the books written by Europeans on my country....On May 25th, 1716, the very unassuming and very obeisant servant Hoange. [English translation by the author]

While the early seventeenth century witnessed economic and religious (Jesuit mission) interaction between Portugal, Holland, Britain and China, the momentum of this great interest and demand for things Chinese was carried on by France in the later seventeenth century, especially after 1680, when the Jesuits turned to the French king, Louis XIV more frequently for aid. Also it is recorded that by the late seventeenth century many illustrated books had reached France from China as imperial gifts.

As we can tell from the letter in fig 7-1, the catalogue of Chinese manuscripts and books was compiled in the king's library in 1716, by a native Chinese named Arcade Hoange upon the request of Louis XIV. Arcade Hoange (also spelled Arcadius Huang or Arcadio Hoange) was a Chinese Christian who was born in Fujian in 1679 and educated by the missionaries. Hoange later made the trip to France with Artus de Lyonne, bishop of Rosalie and lived in Paris from 1711 till 1716. It is recorded that during that time, Hoange made acquaintances with some of the leading thinkers of the era, who learned Chinese and gained knowledge of China from him, including Montesquieu.¹⁵⁹ From his diary and numerous notes that are now collected in the Bibliotheque de Nationale France, it is clear that Hoange had completed numerous translations.¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, Nathalie Monnet, the chief conservator of the Bibliotheque

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 231: "Montesquieu saw him frequently in the course of the summer or in autumn, 1713; as twenty pages of the called notes certify: 'Some comments on China, which I drew of dialogues which I had with Mr Hoange. "This dialogue acted indirectly as model in the personages of the Persian Letters of 1721, and the substance of their dialogues was integrated in the Mind of the Laws of 1748."'

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

Nationale de France states that Hoange had been the China translator for Louis XIV and had been recruited to compile a Chinese-French dictionary, including a complete grammar.¹⁶¹

It is worth asking what kind of Chinese manuscripts and books were available in Paris at the time from which Hoange could compile a full catalogue. Two books with rich illustrations, *Bencao Gangmu* 本草纲目 (*Compendium of Material Medica*) published in 1596 and *Tiangong Kaiwu* 天工开物 (*Exploitation of the Works of Nature*), published in 1637 (as figs. 7-2 and 7-3 show) were identified on the list:

Deux ouvrages, qui figurant dans les sections suivantes du catalogues rédigées par Fourmont, sont des exemples représentatifs de la diversité des accroissements de la collection royale.¹⁶²

Two works, which represent catalogs in the following sections written by Fourmont, are representative examples of the increasing diversity of the royal collection - English translation by the author.

Bencao Gangmu, 本草纲目 (*Compendium of Material Medica*), published in 1596, is recorded as a fine edition with natural history illustrations, wrapped in a yellow

¹⁶¹ Ibid, p. 231: “Il devint interprète du Roi, puis fut recruté par l’abbé Bignon à un dictionnaire chinois-français et ses papiers sur la langue et la grammaire chinoises ont été conservés.”

¹⁶² Nathalie Monnet, ‘Les Livres Chinois de Louis XIV’, *Kangxi Empereur de Chine 1662-1772 : La Cité Interdite à Versailles*, Musée National du Château de Versailles, 27 Janvier – 9 Mai 2004, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Paris, 2004, p. 215.

binding.¹⁶³ As fig. 7-2 illustrates, this book contains depictions of a variety of birds, plants and their Chinese names; these might be the motifs that were borrowed by contemporary French artists who had the opportunity to visit the king's library.

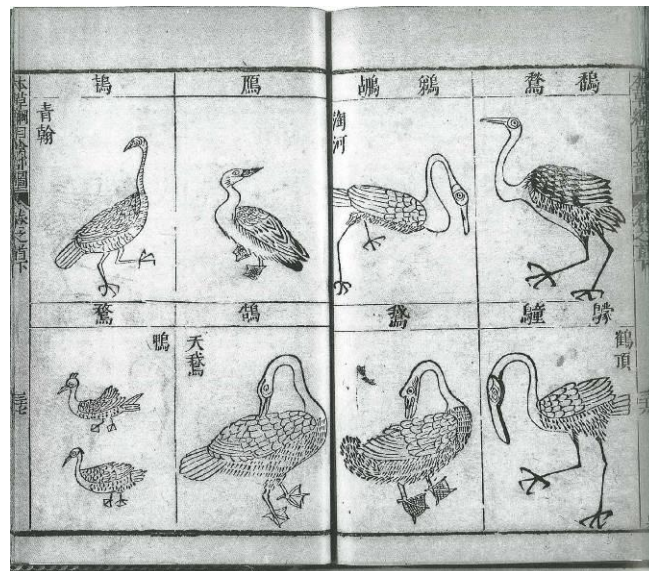


Fig. 7-2 Li Shizhen (1518-1593), *Bencao Gangmu* (*Compendium of Material Medica*), published in Nanking, 1596, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Manuscrits Orientaux, Paris.

¹⁶³ Ibid, p. 211.

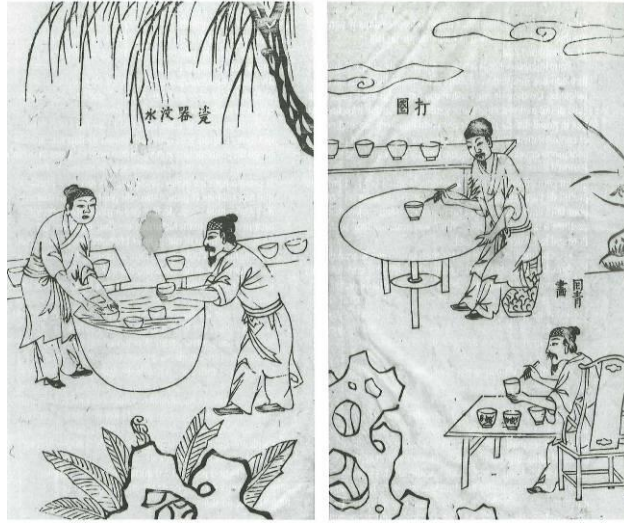


Fig. 7-3 Song Yingxing (1590-1640), *Tiangong Kaiwu* (*Exploitation of the Works of Nature*), published in 1637, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Manuscrits Orientaux, Paris.

Fig 7-3 shows one of the illustrations in *Tiangong Kaiwu*, *Exploitation of the Works of Nature*, a technical and technological encyclopedia compiled by Song Yingxing (1590-1640). Here we see that the process of porcelain-making painted step by step.

In addition, it is worth mentioning some important people who not only contributed to bringing the Chinese manuscripts, books and paintings into the king's library before 1716, but also were responsible for introducing Chinese philosophy and ideologies to France. Father Bouvet was certainly one of them. In 1684, Bouvet brought back to Louis XIV forty-one Chinese books in total, which were then donated to the king's Library. This donation was recorded by Nicolas Clement, curator of the library:

Le 27 Mai 1697 le R. P. Bouvet Jésuite missionnaire a la Chine a fait apporter à la Bibliothèque quarante-un volumes en langage chinois, lesquels ont été envoyés au Roy par l'Empereur de la Chine.¹⁶⁴

On May 27th, 1697 the missionary R.P. Bouvet brought to the Library forty-one volumes in the Chinese language, which were sent to the king by the Chinese emperor - English translation by the author.

Shen Fuchang, the Chinese who was mentioned earlier in Chapter VI, accompanied Bouvet. Fuchang was said to have helped in expanding the book on the provinces of China:

Le Chinois Shen Fuzng venu avec Couplet... Il vint aussi à Paris comme l'attestent deux ouvrages actuellement à la Bibliothèque nationale de France, dont l'un note en première page: "Dans ce volume est une description des provinces de la Chine... Expliqué par un Chinois qui est venu à la Bibliothèque du Roy au mois de juin 1686."¹⁶⁵

The Chinese Shen Fuzng come with Couplet... he also came to Paris, as proved by his two works now in the national Library of France. The first page of one of the two says: "In this volume is a description of the provinces of China explained by a Chinese who came to the king's library in June 1686 - English translation by the author.

¹⁶⁴ Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, Département des Manuscrits, Arch Ar. 18, pp. 305-306.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 209.

Philippe Couplet, a French Jesuit, brought back the manuscripts and translations of four canonical Chinese books, including the discussions of Confucius. These Chinese texts were translated in the West under title *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus sive exposita Scientia Sinensis Latine Exposita*, and appeared in Paris with a dedication to Louis XIV in 1687.¹⁶⁶

In addition, it is recorded that a German doctor, Engelbert Kaemfer (1651-1716), acquired certain Chinese engravings in the Japanese market and brought them back to Europe (some were kept in Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris) where he arrived in October, 1693: “engravings acquired by Kaemfer were drawn on sweat wood in very good state, practically new.”¹⁶⁷

Other French visual arts began to reflect the influence of Chinese designs as well. French taste for Chinese porcelains, lacquer, silk textiles, and wallpapers was exerted through the actual importing of such objects into France.¹⁶⁸ As will be discussed later, Chinese decorative motifs were used directly or inspired the weaving of tapestries, porcelain made in Nevers and marquetry furniture.

Considering the increasing knowledge and appreciation for Chinese art in France, it is no surprise to see that the French court was celebrating the first New Year's Day (at the beginning of the eighteenth century) with Chinese festivities. According to Adolf Reichwein, this was a symbolic phenomenon:

¹⁶⁶ Nathalie Monnet, ‘Les Livres Chinois de Louis XIV’, *Kangxi Empereur de Chine 1662-1772 La Cité interdite à Versailles*, Musée national du château de Versailles 27 janvier – 9 mai 2004, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Paris, 2004, p. 205.

¹⁶⁷ Monique Cohen, *Impressions de Chine*, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, 1992, pp. 157 – 159.

¹⁶⁸ Ragnhild Hatton, *Europe in the Age of Louis XIV*, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. published in Great Britain, 1969, p. 142.

There is a certain symbolical significance in the fact that the first New Year's Day of the century was celebrated at the French court with Chinese festivities. The Rococo was at the door.¹⁶⁹

7.1 Evidence of Chinese Influence on French Literature

In addition to literature on Chinese art and architecture in other countries that had been translated and made available to a French audience, France had its own publications throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Up to 1599, there were approximately forty-three books on China published in France (according to Cordier's Library reckoning), while the number increased to 168 from 1600 – 1699.¹⁷⁰ Among these publications, Du Halde's *Memoires concernant l'histoire, les sciences, etc.* is one of the most monumental in the first half of the eighteenth century. Other influential books that aimed at presenting Chinese civilization to a French audience include Father Louis Le Comte's *De la politique, & du gouvernement des Chinois*, published in 1697, and Francois-Xavier's (1664-1741) *Lettre edifiantes et curieuses*, published in 1726. Le Comte's book devoted much space to religious matters and contains selections that relate to the Chinese attitude toward domestic and foreign trade, the system of taxes, and the

¹⁶⁹ Adolf Reichwein, *China and Europe, Intellectual and Artistic Contacts in the Eighteenth Century*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1925, p. 22.

¹⁷⁰ John Lust, *Western Books On China Published Up to 1850*, Bamboo Publishing Ltd, London, 1987, introduction, p. ix.

natural order, which was widely read and promptly translated into several other European languages.¹⁷¹

French scholars and artists who went to China also played an important role in disseminating knowledge of Chinese art and architecture. When the first group of French Jesuits arrived at Ningpo, their leader, Jean de Fontaney, wrote on November 11, 1687 to the members of the Academie Royale des Sciences at Paris, stating that he and his five companions were each to undertake the investigation of some phase of Chinese culture. Of these, Louis de Comte was to study the history of all the arts, both liberal as well as mechanical.¹⁷² These missionaries were also to have the yearly duty of sending reports on their observations on different subjects back to scholars in France, along with translations from Chinese and Manchu.¹⁷³ Among these reports, Father Bouvet's *Portrait Historique de l'Empereur de la Chine*, published in 1696 in Paris, was said to contribute to creating an idealized picture of China:

¹⁷¹ Ibid, pp. 3-5.

¹⁷² Henri Bernard-Maitre, "Le Voyage du Pere de Fontaney au Siam et a la Chine (1685 – 1687) d'apres des lettres inedites," *Bulletin de l'universite l'aurore*, Shanghai, Series iii, vol.iii, no.2 1942, pp. 279-280.

¹⁷³ Joachim Bouvet, *Portrait Historique de l'Empereur de la Chine*, Paris, 1697, pp. 197-199 and pp. 247 – 250.



Fig. 7-4 Pierre Giffart (1638-1723). Empereur Chinois. Engraving from Joachim Bouvet, *Portrait Historique de l'Empereur de la Chine*, Paris, 1696.

Le père Joachim Bouvet (1657-1730) fut le premier des Mathématiciens du Roi à revenir, en 1697, après une dizaine d'années passées en Chine... Il composa un *Portrait historique de l'Empereur de la Chine* imprimé en 1696 à Paris, qui met en parallèle Louis XIV et Kangxi, les deux plus puissants monarques de l'époque. Le *Portrait* contribua à façonner l'image idéalisée de la Chine, nation au gouvernement sage et policé.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ Nathalie Monnet, 'Les Livres Chinois de Louis XIV', *Kangxi Empereur de Chine 1662-1772 La Cité interdite à Versailles*, Musée national du château de Versailles 27 janvier – 9 mai 2004, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Paris, 2004, pp. 209-211

Father Joachim Bouvet (1657-1730) was the first of the king's mathematicians to come back after a dozen years crossing China in 1697. He composed a historical portrait of the Chinese emperor printed in 1696 in Paris, which puts Louis XIV and Kangxi in parallel, the two more powerful monarchs of the epoch. The portrait contributed to manufacturing the idealized picture of China, which was a nation in the wise government and administration - English translation by the author.

Other than descriptions of Chinese civilization from scholars, books on China with engravings were collected by the royal families of France. Louis XIV at Versailles and the Dauphin at Fontainebleau, both passionate art collectors, owned quantities of Oriental objects d'art. As Michael Sullivan points out:

The inventory of Versailles for 1667 – 69 mentions twelve panels from a screen with birds and landscapes on a gold ground, brought from China, and there were many more screens listed in later inventories, painted with landscapes, figures, birds and flowers, and children's festivals. James II, visiting the Dauphin in his apartments at Versailles after his abdication in 1688, speaks with admiration of his Chinese paintings, meaning, presumably, not hanging scrolls but screens and possibly wall panels...by the time of his death the king's library included no less than 280 volumes of the great illustrated encyclopedia *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng*, completed in 1729, and a book described as *L'encyclopedia Chinoise*, richly illustrated with pictures of scenery, towns and villages, freaks of nature, temples, architecture and an explanation of the arts of drawing and painting, in fourteen volumes.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵Michael Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art*, University of California Press, London and Berkeley, 1989, pp. 98 -99.

7.2 Chinese Influence on French Visual Art

Allons a cette porcelaine,
Sa beaute m'invite, m'entraine.
Elle vient du monde nouveau,
L'on ne peut rien voir de plus beau.
Qu'elle a d'attraits, qu'elle est fine!
Elle est native de la chine.¹⁷⁶

Let us go to this porcelain, her beauty invites me, entrances me... she comes from the new world, of which we cannot see anything more beautiful. How attractive she is, and how fine! She is native of China. -English translation by the author

Other than collecting information on China and Chinese books and manuscripts, Louis XIV also had France's first great collection of Chinese art objects transferred from the palace of Fontainebleau to Versailles. This royal admiration for things Chinese naturally provoked a widespread imitation among those who were closely associated with him, including leading ministers like Richelieu and Mazarin.¹⁷⁷ As a result, the vogue of collecting and imitating Chinese art objects, besides reflecting the significance

¹⁷⁶ Bélévitch-Stankévitch, *Le Goût Chinois en France au temps de Louis XIV*, Paris: Jouve, 1910, p.150.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, pp. xxxi-xxxiii.

of the Chinese philosophies, found ready and enthusiastic admirers among the upper class of seventeenth-century French society.

From as early as the sixteenth century, long before the founding of any French manufactories, the Portuguese appeared at the fairs of Saint Germain and Saint Laurent, selling porcelain as well as other curiosities made at Fontainebleau under Francois I, Henry II, and in the courts of the Queen of Navarre (1534), and Cardinal d'Ambrose (1550).¹⁷⁸

Thanks to the Dutch East-India Company, Chinese porcelain became popular in many of the houses of France's wealthiest in the seventeenth century. The satirist, Loret, wrote in 1653:

Mardy, Monsieur le Cardinal
Par un appret vraiment royal
En plats d'argent et de porcelaine
Traita le roy, traita deux reines.
(*La Muse Historique 1650 – 1665*)

(Mardy, Monsieur le Cardinal [Mazarin, who was very unpopular and much criticized at the time] entertained the King and two Queens on dishes of silver and porcelain).¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ Michel Beurdeley, *Porcelain of the East India Companies*, Barrie & Rockliff, London, 1962, pp. 103 – 104.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid

Later on, the French ship L'Amphitrite returned with a hundred and sixty-seven cases of imported Chinese goods to Nantes on October 4th, 1700. The sale was such a success that a second journey (1701-1703) was organized. Upon the return of this second ship, the newspaper *The Mercury Gallant* announced the arrival of the prestigious cargo formed of one hundred and thirty-four cases, which earned up to 1500,000 pounds. These two inaugural trips signified the commencement of direct trade between France and China in porcelain, which until then had depended more or less on the Dutch and British.¹⁸⁰

Most of the wares brought to France before the eighteenth century were blue-and-white. It is recorded that “the Grand Dauphin de France (1661-1711) had a collection displayed in Boulle cabinets which was the envy of James II, himself a connoisseur. An inventory of court furniture made between 1681 and 1718 comprised, among other things, 1,569 pieces of porcelain.”¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ Louis Mézin, “La France et La Chine de Commande”, *L'Odyssée de la Porcelaine Chinoise*, Réunion des musées nationaux Paris, 2003, p. 104.

¹⁸¹ Michel Beurdeley, *Porcelain of the East India Companies*, Barrie & Rockliff, London, 1962, pp. 103 – 104.



Fig. 7-5 Jacques-Samuel Bernard, French, *Still Life with Violin, Ewer, and Bouquet of Flowers*, 1657, Fine Art Museum of San Francisco.

Fig. 7-5 illustrates an example of the blue-and-white porcelain which symbolically reflected the prestige and wealth of its owners, among mid-seventeenth-century French families. In the Museum Guimet, Paris, we see more examples of the Chinese porcelain pieces that were exported in the Kangxi period (1662 – 1722) to France.



Fig. 7-6 Porcelain exported to France in the Kangxi period, 1662 – 1722, Museum Guimet, Paris.

Fig 7-6 is a typical example of porcelains that were imported to France in the late seventeenth century. The mountain is covered by clouds, while a group of people are dressed in traditional Chinese costumes. Fig 7-7 is noteworthy because of its affinity with Chinese landscape painting. Here, the bird's-eye view perspective presents a foreground with a tree, rocks and river, which are surrounded by the mountains as backdrop.



Fig. 7-7 Chinese Porcelain exported to France in the Kangxi period, 1662 – 1722, Museum, Guimet, Paris.



Fig. 7-8 Chinese Porcelain exported to France in the Kangxi period, 1662 – 1722, Museum Guimet, Paris.

The distinguished character of fig. 7-8 lies in its detailed representation of Chinese architecture, which might account for the details of Chinese architecture that were depicted in the Beauvais tapestries.

Surrounded by trees and rocks, the building is depicted in perspective with its environment. Here we see clearly the over-hanging roof with curved roof lines. The building is designed to be of several stories, so that it fits the height of this porcelain vase.



Fig. 7-9 Chinese Porcelain exported to France in the Kangxi period, 1662 – 1722, Museum Guimet, Paris.

Fig 7-9 is another example of how Chinese paintings and Chinese aesthetic sentiment can be represented on porcelains. Here we see that the painting framed by a curvaceous line, foreshadowing what will become popular at the corners of Rococo rooms a generation or two later.



Fig. 7-10 Porcelain exported to France in the Kangxi period, 1662 – 1722, Museum Guimet, Paris.



Fig. 7-11 Porcelains exported to France in the Kangxi period, 1662 – 1722, Museum Guimet, Paris.

In addition to blue-and-white porcelains, France also imported quite a few polychrome porcelains. As shown in fig 7-10 and fig. 7-11, porcelains of various shapes are painted with different decorative patterns of birds, flowers, animals and stones, reflecting an attempt to please the eye with colors and informality. This French appreciation for polychrome porcelain, which was different from that of its neighbor Holland, was noteworthy because this taste for colorful decorations would influence French tapestry, paintings and interior design.



Fig. 7-12 Faience bottle, Nevers, early seventeenth century, Louvre Museum, Paris.

From the early seventeenth century, France began to make efforts in producing its own porcelain. Borrowing decorative motifs from the large number of porcelains imported from China at that time, fig. 7-12 shows an example of a bottle made in Nevers. As W. B. Honey, keeper of the Department of Ceramics, Victoria and Albert Museum, points out, the blue monochrome alone speaks of the fashion for the blue-and-white inspired by the imported porcelain.¹⁸²

¹⁸² W. B. Honey, *French Porcelain of the Eighteenth Century*, Faber and Faber, London, 1972, p. 4.

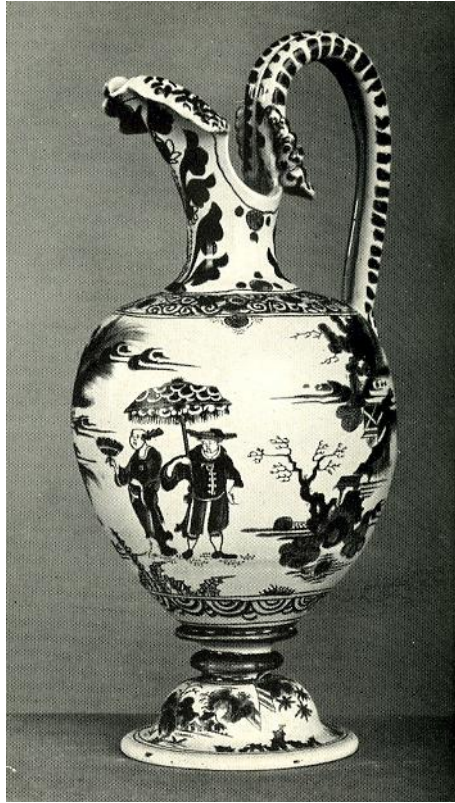


Fig. 7-13 Ewer, tin-glazed earthenware, Nevers, 1650-80, the Vitoria and Albert Museum, London.

Fig. 7-13 illustrates another more colorful example made in the later seventeenth century. Here we see more empty space is employed as background for Chinese figures in a landscape. We also see a decorative motif – the parasol – which became a popular image in many tapestries later on. All these figures, plants and aesthetic sentiments may well have been inspired by the engravings in the books in the king's library, which was mentioned earlier.

In the above figures, we notice one difference between the decorative motifs depicted on Chinese porcelain and the early French faience. While most of the imported Chinese porcelains had birds-and-flowers and landscape on them, faiences made in

Never were centered on human figures, suggesting both a familiarity with and preference for Chinese figures and costumes.

In addition to porcelain, French tapestry began to reflect the passion for Chinese life and landscape as well, which was based on a mixture of real knowledge and imagination. Sometimes called “frescoes of the north,” the tapestries occupied an important place in interior decoration: not only as an element to keep in warmth, but also as sign of wealth and a privileged social position.¹⁸³ For many years, the manufactory at Beauvais wove a series of tapestries called *The Story of the Emperor of China*, probably inspired by numerous accounts of Kangxi, which were discussed earlier. This clearly indicates the influence that literature had had on visual art, especially in terms of motifs and ideologies. In the series (six altogether) from *L'Histoire de l'empereur de la Chine*, for example, we discern the familiar image of the pagoda again woven into the background, suggesting symbols of China.

¹⁸³ Marie-Hélène de Ribou, ‘L’histoire de l’empereur de la Chine’, *Kangxi Empereur de Chine 1662-1772 : La Cité interdite à Versailles*, Musée national du château de Versailles 27 janvier – 9 mai 2004, Réunion des Musée Nationaux, 2004, p. 221.



Fig. 7-14 The Astronaut, *The Story of the Emperor of China*, Beauvais Tapestry, 1690s, Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

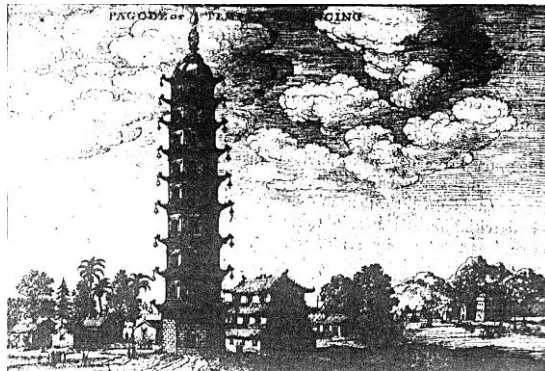


Fig. 7-15 Pagoda of the Temple of Lincing. Illustrated and described in Nieuhoff's *Travels*, engraving, 1665.

If we compare fig. 7-14 with fig. 7-15, we see striking similarities between the two. Considering the popularity of Nieuhoff's books (mentioned in Chapter V), it is highly probable that the image of the pagoda in the background is borrowed directly from the engravings in Nieuhoff's book more than two decades before. We see the silhouette of the same pagoda again in another tapestry in the same series named "*The*

Emperor on the Sea" (as fig. 7-16 shows). Surely this is not a mere coincidence but rather evidence of the widespread popularity of the motif.



Fig. 7-16 *The Emperor on the Sea*, Beauvais tapestry, the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, Louvre Museum, Paris.



Fig. 7-17 Background behind the main pavilion in fig. 7-18.



Fig. 7-18 The Audience with the Emperor of China. Beauvais Tapestry, c. 1690, National Museum of Chateau Compiègne.

Furthermore, another tapestry in this series demonstrates more direct influence from Nieuhoff's book and engravings. The emperor is sitting in the middle while several others are greeting him by kneeling, also called the kowtow in Chinese. A three-story temple is depicted as background along with several other Chinese buildings.

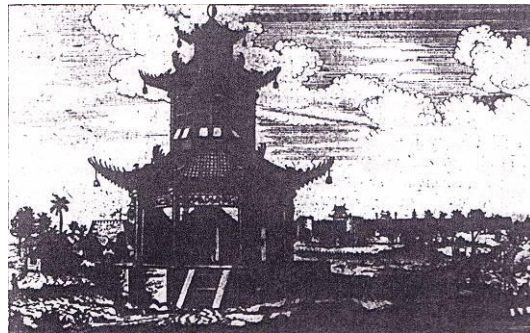


Fig. 7-19 Temple illustrated and described in Nieuhoff's *Travels*, engraving, 1665.

If we compare this temple with the one illustrated in Nieuhoff's book (fig. 7-19), we can see a strong resemblance: both have three stories, both have steps with the

front façade facing the viewer, and both show four corners of an octagon with hanging bells attached to them.



Fig. 7-20 Aubusson Chinoiserie landscape tapestry, private collection, the Franes Research Archive (Late seventeenth century)

Fig. 7-20 shows us another piece of tapestry, where the image of a similar pavilion becomes a focal point in the design. This was woven in Aubusson, which French city is said to be famous because of its Chinoiserie landscape venture in the seventeenth century.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴ *Chinoiserie: European Tapestry and Needlework 1680 – 1780*, Exhibition 19th October – 19th December 2006, Franes, London, 2006 p. 11.



Fig. 7-21 *The Emperor of China*, Beauvais Tapestry. c. 1690, Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

In addition, fig. 7-21 represents a prototype of exotic buildings that would become more and more popular in Europe in the eighteenth century. Other than the Chinese buildings that are merged into the background, the double arched canopy that arches over the throne in the foreground is a whimsical structure created by the Beauvais artists. This fantastic pavilion with its spindly Gothic ornament is akin to the eighteenth-century Chinoiserie pavilions or pagodas in a variety of European gardens, where a mixture of Gothic and Chinese motifs was created (Fig. 7-22 shows an example).



Fig. 7-22, Philosopher's Pavilion at Bagatelle, Francois-Joseph Belanger, architect, built c. 1778.¹⁸⁵

The influence of Chinese artistic production on European designs was by no means limited to literature and tapestry. Many contemporary French artists, such as Jean Berain (1640 – 1711), one of Louis XIV's official designers who created "the Berainesque" style of playful grotesques, and his student Daniel Marot, drew inspiration from Chinese motifs in their designs. As in fig. 7-23 and 7-24, it is clear that Berain must have examined Chinese decorative motifs with great care to be able to employ them in both tapestry and engravings with such freedom.

¹⁸⁵ See Bernd H. Dams & Andrew Zega, *Chinoiserie*, Rizzoli, New York, 2008, p. 86.



Fig. 7-23 Beauvais tapestry (with details of Chinese figures), designed before 1688, Jean Berain (1640 – 1711),
Getty Museum, Los Angeles.



Fig. 7-24 Jean I Berain, engraving (with detail of Chinese pavilion) after Jean Berain by Jeremias Wolff, Getty
Museum, Los Angeles.

Considering the fact the Berain had been in charge of providing the costumes and settings for royal festivals at the court of Louis XIV,¹⁸⁶ it is no wonder that his acquaintance with Chinese and other figures and costumes served to enrich his repertoire. Fig. 7-25 shows another example of Berain's design, reflecting his interest in Chinese costumes.



Fig. 7-25 Jean Berain, c. 1700, Design for a masquerade costume, Madarin Chinese.

Berain's student Daniel Marot (1661-1752), who later was appointed one of William III of England's architects, demonstrated his familiarity with Chinese

¹⁸⁶ Dawn Jacobson, *Chinoiserie*, Phaidon Press, 1993, London, p. 30.

decorative motifs in a variety of his designs.¹⁸⁷ Fig. 7-26 gives us an example of such knowledge of Chinese figures and costumes.



Fig. 7-26 Daniel Marot, Main Staircase at Het Loo Palace, engraving, c. 1702.

Regarded as the artist who was responsible for “the diffusion of the Louis XIV style in Europe,”¹⁸⁸ Marot’s knowledge of Chinese motifs was much more profound than merely figures and costumes. Fig. 7-27 illustrates how familiar he was with the decorative motifs of Chinese architecture. By designing the lacquer and porcelain cabinet to make it an integral whole, this engraving indicates how much attention Marot and his contemporary artists paid to designing the walls and reliefs so that the interior was the best place to display and appreciate the fine porcelains, especially the fireplace mantel.

¹⁸⁷ Daniel Marot, *Das ornamentwerk des Daniel Marot in 264 lichtdrucken nachgebildet*, Berlin, E. Wasmuth, 1892, pp. 5-6.

¹⁸⁸ Hugh Honour, *Chinoiserie The Vision of Cathay*, John Murray Publisher Ltd., Great Britain, 1961, p. 251.

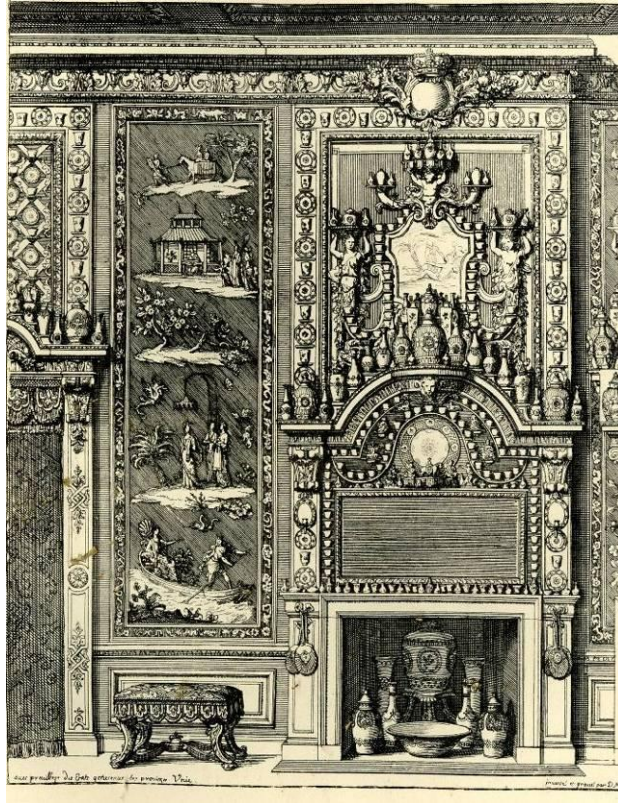


Fig. 7-27 Daniel Marot, design for a Chinese room, engraving, c. 1700, the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

7.3 Chinese influence on French Architecture

A little palace in an extraordinary style, and the perfect place to pass the time on a summer's day.

— Andre Felibien, writing of the Trianon de Porcelaine¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ André Félibien, *Description sommaire du Chateau de Versailles*, Paris, G. Desprez, 1674, p. 109.

As fig. 7-27 illustrates, it became an aristocratic fashion during early eighteenth-century France to have ‘Chinese rooms’ in which Chinese silk coverings, porcelain jars or lacquer cabinets were combined with Chinese wallpapers or tapestries, just as they had been popular in Holland and Portugal. Figs. 7-28 and 7-29 show an example of such a Chinese room in Rambouillet Palace. The bathroom walls are covered in Delft tiles featuring landscapes and naval subject matter, while the large panels with their floral designs are from Rouen.

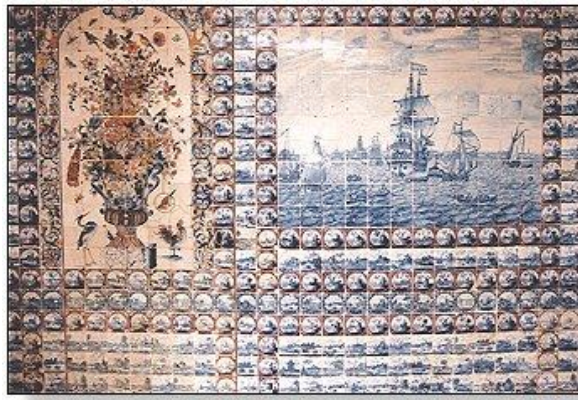


Fig. 7-28 The Count of Toulouse bathroom in Rambouillet Palace, Rambouillet, France (created between 1715 – 1730)



Fig. 7-29 Detail of 7-28, floral designs in Rambouillet Palace, Rambouillet, France.

A closer look at fig. 7-28 reveals more detail about the French understanding of Chinese paintings in the early eighteenth century. Here, a variety of birds are packed in the flowers. The vase is in the traditional blue-and-white color of Chinese porcelain landscape paintings. The composition on the vase, along with the distant mountain, together indicate a close acquaintance with Chinese aesthetics in France in the early eighteenth century.

The growing fascination with Chinese porcelain led to the creation of a “porcelain” building, built in Versailles as early as the seventeenth century. In 1670, Louis XIV commissioned from Louis Le Vau the first building with exterior Chinese-style decoration in Europe: the Trianon. It was located at the end of the northern arm of the Grand Canal, and was finished with polychromed faience which

tilled the walls of the forecourts, while the roof ridges featured porcelain vases interspersed with naturalistically painted sculptures of birds. According to Annick Heitzmann, “The Trianon was among the most expensive buildings ever erected in France.”¹⁹⁰

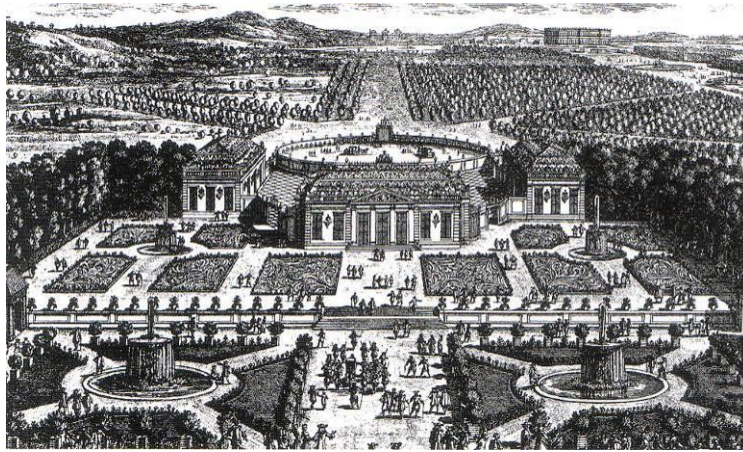


Fig. 7-30 The Trianon de Porcelain, Versailles. Engraving c. 1675.

¹⁹⁰ Annick Heitzmann, “*Trianon*” in *Chateaux de Faïence*, Louveciennes: Musée-Promenade de Marly-le-Roi-Louveciennes, 1993, pp. 79-84.



Fig. 7-31 Charles Le Brun and Francois d'Orbay, built in 1671, the Trainon de Porcelain, Versailles, watercolor painting by Bernd H. Dames and Andrew Zega, interpretation based on historical examples and documents.

Thanks to Bernd H. Dames and Andrew Zega, we now have a closer visual image of the facade to ponder upon (as fig. 7-31 shows). Although named a “porcelain pavilion”, we cannot discern more sentiments of Chinese architecture than the tile walls and the vases standing on the roof.

Yet when we turn to the decorative vases and interior design of this building, we find many more traits of Chinese influence. Fig. 7-32 illustrates a painted tole vase which belongs to one of a series to embellish the parterres of the Trianon de Porcelain. Here we see the blue and white color which is echoed in a painting of the interior of the Trianon de Porcelain, illustrated in fig. 7-33.



Fig. 7-32 A painted tole vase holding an orange tree. This anonymous design, one of a series to embellish the parterres of the Trianon de Porcelaine, was executed circa 1674 and is now destroyed. Andrew Zega and Bernd H.

Dams' rendering.



Fig. 7-33 Madame de Montespan reclining in Oriental splendor at the Trianon de Porcelain. The anonymous gouache originally decorated a fan. Delicate blue rinceaux embellish the window frames.

This painting is in accordance with Jean Francois Felibien's decription shortly after the Trianon was built. According to him, some of the furniture and interior decoration was in the Chinese manner while the painting of the faience tiles on the roof sounds Occidental:

On the entablature is a balustrade laden with a great number of vases, and the entire roof forms a kind of finial, whose lower part is decorated with young cupids, armed with bows and arrows, in pursuit of animals. Above these are numerous porcelain vases, arranged in rows up to the ridge of the roof, with various birds reproduced to life. The pavilions beside the main block are ornamented in the same fashion, and help

to fulfill the initial object: to construct what is both a little palace in an extraordinary style, and the perfect place to pass the time on a summer's day.¹⁹¹



Fig. 7-34 Table with marquetry of blue horn and white ivory, French furniture, 1680s, Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

Other than these paintings that help us visualize how the façade of the *Trianon de Porcelaine* would look, it is said that the furniture was European in form but incorporated white ivory and blue horn foliate marquetry designed to match the blue and white porcelain on display. A surviving table from this group, now in the Getty Museum (Fig. 7-34), is perhaps the earliest example of European marquetry influenced

¹⁹¹ Patrick Conner, *Oriental Architecture in the West*, Thames and Hudson, 1979, London, pp. 20 – 21, cited from André Félibien, *Description sommaire du Chateau de Versailles*, Paris, G. Desprez, 1674.

directly by Chinese blue-and-white porcelain. It marks the beginning of the long history of Chinese influence on marquetry.¹⁹²

¹⁹² Yannick Chastang, *Paintings in Wood, French Marquetry Furniture*, The Wallace Collection, 2001, London, p. 95.

CHAPTER VIII: CHINESE INFLUENCE ON ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

*Es will der König sich nach goldnen Früchten sehen,
So doch die schwache Hand nicht überreichen kan.
Drum lässt sie nur Porphyr und Borax in Cristallen
Jetzt vor des Königs Thron stadt jenes Opfers fallen.
Ja sie reicht selbst das Hertz in porcellanen Schalen
Und biette beydes hier au einem Opfer an.*

Johann Friedrich Böttger on Boxing day, 1709.¹⁹³

The king will yearn for golden fruit, which the feeble hand yet cannot present. On this account is proffered now but crystals of porphyry and borax before the king's throne in place of those sacrifices. Yes, the hand extends even the heart in vessels of porcelain. And as an offering here tenders both.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ Carl August Engerlhardt, *Johann Friedrich Böttger, Erfinder des Sächsischen Porzellans*, Leipzig, 1837, p. 296. Johann Friedrich Böttger's letter to August the Strong, sent to the King on Boxing day, 1709.

¹⁹⁴ Cited by Ingelore Menzhauden, *Early Meissen Porcelain in Dresden*, Thames and Hudson, Berlin, 1735, p. 7.

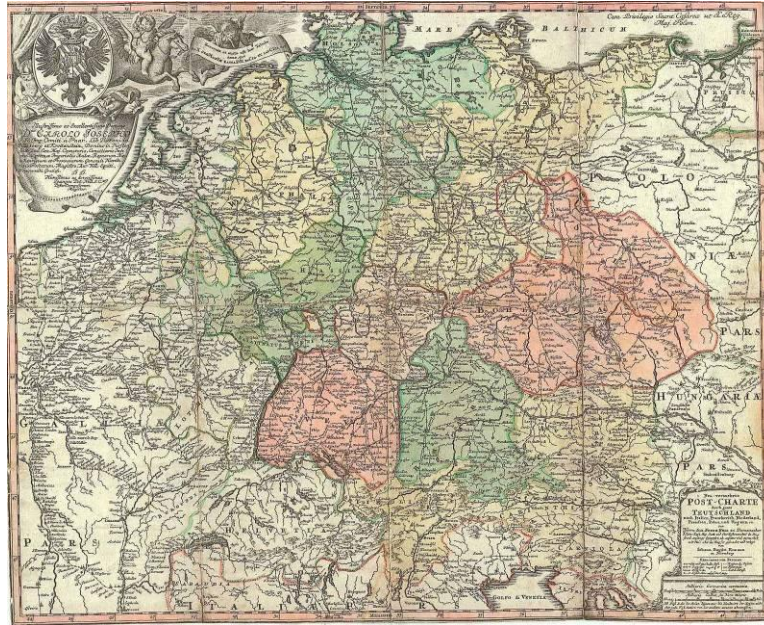


Fig. 8-1 Johann Baptist Homann, Map, ca. 1729, showing the post roads on the Elbe River, which were the primary routes for diplomatic correspondences, regular mail, and shipments of other goods from Dresden to the rest of Europe. HStA 12884 Karten und Risse, Schr. I, f. 9, no. 3c.

Having addressed Chinese influence on European countries such as Portugal, Holland, Britain and France in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we need to be aware of the ever-increasing mobility in the seventeenth century that was transcending the geographical boundaries of Europe. As Timothy Brook points out:

The explosion of seventeenth-century immigration was prefaced by an attraction for China that already had begun to shape European choices in the sixteenth century... First encounters were becoming sustained engagements; fortuitous exchanges were being systematized into regular trade; the language of gesture was being supplanted by pidgin

dialects and genuine communication. Running through all these changes was the common factor of mobility... The seventeenth century was a century of second contacts.¹⁹⁵

Additionally, it is vital to understand that along with the Jesuit missionaries' continuous contribution to the interchange of the two civilizations, the growth in mobility was transforming contemporary Europeans' daily lives in the seventeenth century. European artists were increasingly traveling between countries; royal family members were more than ever arranging marriages across national boundaries to gain more power; diplomatic gifts including porcelain were exchanged between kings and empresses, and books and correspondences were published upon an ever-growing demand while salon conversations served to transfer all information ever more quickly. The speed of information-dissemination in the seventeenth century thus cannot be underestimated. In this context, the influence caused by more understanding of Chinese porcelain, artifacts and aesthetic values runs from economic and religious interactions to the arenas of art and architecture in other European countries.

To begin with, we turn to Germany, where the first porcelain manufactory in Europe was established at Meissen – the *Porzellanschloss* (Porcelain Palace) in Dresden was not far away.

On Boxing Day of 1709, Johann Friedrich, generally acknowledged as the inventor of European porcelain, wrote the above-quoted poem to King Augustus II the Strong. The next year, Böttger became head of the first porcelain manufactory in Europe

¹⁹⁵ Timothy Brook, *Vermeer's Hat: the Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World*, Bloomsbury Press, New York and London, 2008, p. 19.

at Meissen, begun in 1710. According to Ingelore Menzhauden, the establishment of the Meissen factory fired the king's passion for collecting porcelain even more; "It would appear that the success of the Meissen factory after 1720 kindled the King's passion for collecting porcelain. This is demonstrated by the large-scale acquisitions of this period and a confession contained in a letter written by the king to Count Flemming (22 May 1726)."¹⁹⁶

This statement is confirmed by the King's own words:

"Ne savez-vous pas qu'il est des oranges comme des porcelains, que ceux qui one une fois la maladie des uns ou des autres ne trouvent jamais qu'ils en ayent assez et que plus ils en veulement avoir."¹⁹⁷ (Are you not aware that the same is true for oranges as for porcelain, that once one has the sickness for one or the other, one can never get enough of the things and wishes to have more and more.)

Two questions come to mind upon reading the above lines – to satisfy the King's "sickness for more and more porcelain," where would he get it? And to house all those porcelains, what kind of building could have been used, and more specifically, in order to exhibit porcelain collections suitably and harmoniously, what kind of textile, interior decorations and furniture were employed to enhance their beauty? To answer the first question, we look into historical documents for more evidence.

¹⁹⁶ Ingelore Menzhauden, *Early Meissen Porcelain in Dresden*, Thames and Hudson, Berlin, 1735, p. 7.

¹⁹⁷ Jean Louis Sponsel, *Kabinettstücke Meissner Porzellan – Manufaktur von Johann Joachim Kändler*, Leipzig, H. Seeman, 1900, p. 10.

Due to the proximity of Meissen Manufactory, a large number of porcelains were certainly produced and delivered to the King directly from there.



Fig. 8-2 Plate, China, Kangxi Period (1662-1722)



Fig. 8-3 Plate, Meissen, c. 1739, Dresden Palace Dresden Palace.

As fig. 8-2 and 8-3 show, some of the early Meissen porcelains borrowed decorative motifs directly from Chinese originals. It is recorded that as early as the

eighteenth century, a simplification of one basic design, though the detail still resembles the Chinese original, led to the popular *Zwiebelmuster* (onion pattern)¹⁹⁸



Fig. 8-4 Vases with covers decorated with underglaze cobalt blue, c. 1721 – 25, Meissen, Dresden Palace.

Fig. 8-4 reveals the techniques and refinement that the Meissen manufactory was able to achieve in the beginning of the eighteenth century. Here we see the motifs of Chinese figures along with landscapes and plants. While the early Meissen factory produced more blue-and-white porcelain, more and more colorful pieces were increasingly produced, as fig. 8-5 and 8-6 illustrate:

¹⁹⁸ Ingelore Menzhauden, *Early Meissen Porcelain in Dresden*, Thames and Hudson, Berlin, 1735 p. 197.



Fig. 8-5 & 8-6 (detail of 8-5), Trumpet vase and detail of the decoration, Meissen, 1726, Dresden Palace.

In these examples, while more colors of light pink, yellow and gold are employed here in the trumpet vase, the essential motif is still that of Chinese figures in traditional costumes combined with the bird-and-flower paintings.

It is recorded that in 1717, Augustus II proposed to offer Friedrich Wilhelm I part of his military force, pointing out that he (Augustus) would be happy to ‘accept porcelain and all other things in return’ and:

The idea was quite agreeable to Friedrich Wilhelm... Large-size pieces were boxed up for transport at Oranienburg and Charlottenburg (as fig. 8-7 shows). At Oranienburg, April 29, 1717, the following porcelain was packed up:

18 large vases.

A dozen and eight large plates decorated with colored flowers and gold.

Two dozen plates, decorated in the center with a flower pot with red roses.

Sixteen plates painted blue on white.

Twelve bowls painted blue on white, of various kinds with panels on the rims, some with a bird, some with flowers.

Charlottenburg, May 1, 1717

At the most gracious order of the king the following royal porcelain pieces here in Charlottenburg have been packed and delivered to the Royal Court quartermaster Mr. Seefeldern, so that he may bring them to Dresden:

12 tall vases, of which 7 are with covers and 5 without, packed in four-cornered boxes, as follows:

9 boxes with 1 piece each	9 pieces
<u>1 box</u>	<u>3 pieces</u>
10 boxes	12 pieces
37 pots for orange trees, packed in boxes as follows:	
7 boxes with 4 pieces each	28 pieces
1 box	6 pieces
<u>3 boxes</u> with one piece each	<u>3 pieces</u>
11 boxes	37 pieces

The exchange shows the extent to which the value set on porcelain in Brandenburg-Prussia and in Saxony respectively was turned almost upon its head.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁹ *Fragile Diplomacy: Meissen Porcelain for European Courts ca. 1710 – 63*, edited by Cassify-Geiger, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2008, p. 91.

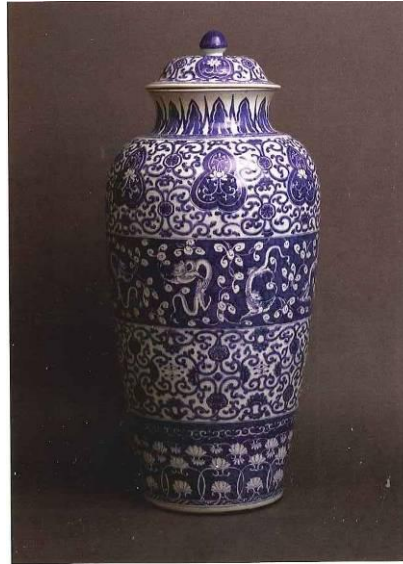


Fig. 8-7 Jar, or 'Dragoon' vase, 1662 – 1722. Chinese porcelain. One of the exchanged gifts between Brandenburg-Prussia and Saxony. Peabody Essex Museum, Salem.

When we look back in history, we learn that it was not new to give porcelain as a princely gift. More than one century earlier in 1590, the grand duke of Tuscany had included sixteen pieces of Ming porcelain as part of a large presentation to the Saxon Lector in Dresden²⁰⁰ (Fig. 8-8).

²⁰⁰ *Fragile Diplomacy: Meissen Porcelain for European Courts ca. 1710 – 63*, edited by Cassify-Geiger, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2008, p. 3.



Fig. 8-8 Bowl, Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644). Porcelain. Presented by Ferdinand de Medici to Christian I of Saxony in 1590. Porzellansammlung, Staatliche Kuntsammlungen Dresden.

What is special is that during the reign of Louis XIV, porcelain became “the ambassadorial gift”²⁰¹ because of its symbolic values that were adored by royal families and passionate advocates such as Louis XIV, Augustus II and Queen Sophie Dorothea. To gain a better understanding of what kind of buildings would be appropriate for housing the King’s amassed collections, we need to look at more evidence than the obvious answer of the *Porzellanschloss* (porcelain palace)²⁰² located at Dresden.

²⁰¹ Guy Walton, “The Era of Louis XIV” A Turning Point in the History of Diplomatic Gifts,” I Collinson, ed., Versailles, 1992, p. 21. See also Walton, “Diplomatic and Ambassadorial Gifts of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” *Gifts to the Tsars*, New York : H.N. Abrams ; Indianapolis, Ind. : In association with the Indianapolis Museum of Art and the State Historical-Cultural Museum Preserve, Moscow, Kremlin, 2001, pp. 75-95.

²⁰² Ingelore Menzhauden, *Early Meissen Porcelain in Dresden*, Thames and Hudson, Berlin, 1735, p.6: “In 1717 the King (Augustus II) acquired the Holländisches Palais (Dutch Palace), which stood on the banks of the River Elbe on the other side of the old Augustus Bridge in what known as ‘Neue Königs Stadt’. The King commissioned Pöppelmann, the architect of the Zwinger, to undertake the reconstruction work necessary to convert the building, later to be named Japanisches Palais (Japanese Palace), into a *Porzellanschloss* (porcelain palace) based on his own designs.”

Another palace originally commissioned by the Prussian Queen Sophie, Charlottenburg Palace, which also had a porcelain room gives us more information.

Around 1702, Daniel Marot, the architect hired by William III of England who was mentioned earlier, executed the engraving of a certain porcelain room that was fashionable in Europe (fig. 8-9).

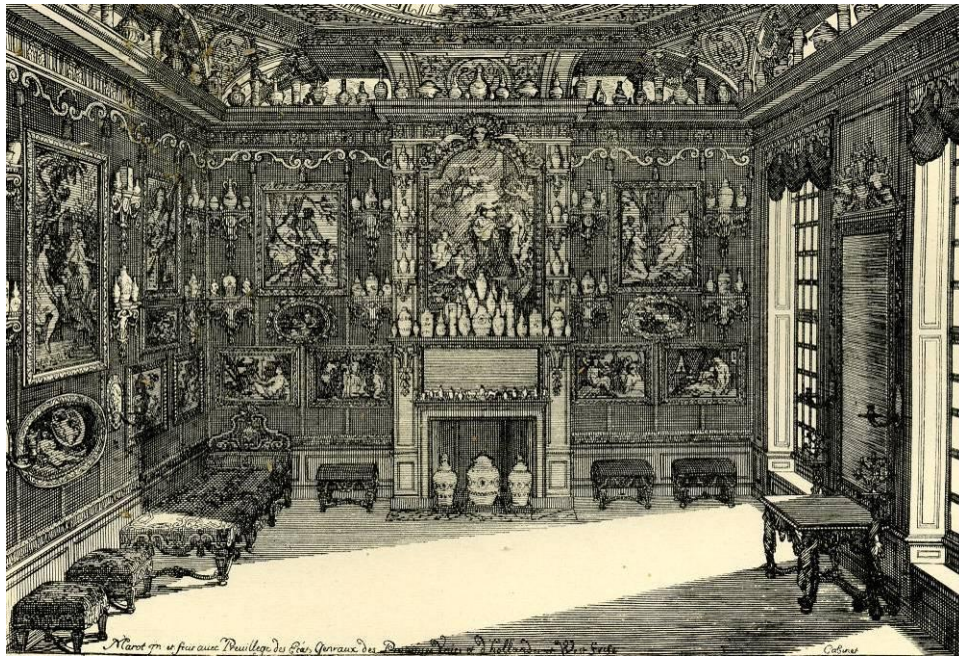


Fig. 8-9 Engraving of a porcelain room by Daniel Marot, c. 1702.

Comparison between figs. 8-9, 8-10 and 8-11 shows striking similarities of the interior design, reflecting the contemporary taste of porcelain rooms in European palaces. A number of mirrors were placed to form a background, reflecting and accentuating the light and luster on the surface of the blue-and-white porcelains, which is in accordance with the description of the British Queen that we read before in Chapter VI: “the Queen brought in the custom or humors, as I may call it, of furnishing

houses with Chinaware which increased to a strange degree afterwards, piling their China upon the tops of cabinets.”²⁰³

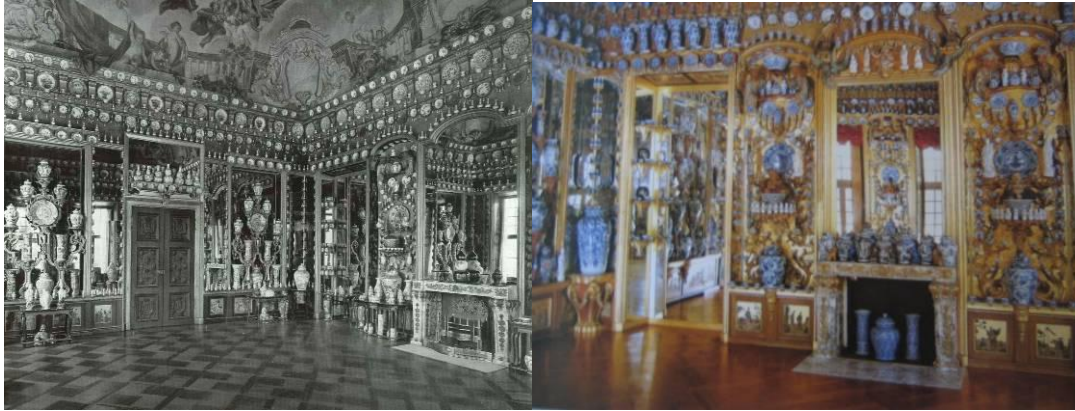


Fig. 8-10 & 8-11. Charlottenburg Palace, Porcelain Room, Berlin, c. 1705.

A more complete example is found in the Nymphenberg Palace, the summer residence and seat of Bavaria's electors and kings. Founded in 1664, Nymphenburg was extended on the model of the French royal court while the Pagodenburg (1718-1720), Badenburg (1718-1722) and Amalienburg (1734) pavilions were designed and built one after the other.²⁰⁴

²⁰³ *The Treasure Houses of Britain*, edited by Gervase Jackson-Stops, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1985, p. 204.

²⁰⁴ Peter O. Kruckmann, *The Wittelsbach Palaces from Landshut and Habschstadt to Munich*, Munich; New York : Prestel Verlag, 2001, p. 42.

It is said that the idea of a fanciful pavilion resembling a precious casket came from Maximilian Emanuel himself. The room on the ground floor of the Nymphenburg, the so-called “Saletl,” is decorated with nearly 2,000 Dutch tiles.²⁰⁵



Fig. 8-12 & 8-13 (detail of 8-12) Joseph Effner, interior of the Pagodenburg (1718-1720), Nymphenburg, near Munich.

As fig. 8-12 and 8-13 illustrate, the tiles in “Saletl,” were all made in blue-and-white while light-colored decorations spread over the walls and niches.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 42.



Fig. 8-14 Joseph Effner, Chinese Cabinet Room, Pagodenburg (1718-1720), Nymphenburg, near Munich.

Fig. 8-14 represents another room in Pagodenburg, the Chinese cabinet room. Here the bird-and-flower paintings became lacquer panels while the furniture and tables inside were originally designed in France to match the whole ambience.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶ *Nymphenburg Official Guide*, Prestel, Munich, 2005, p. 42.



Fig. 8-15 & 8-16 (detail of 8-15) of the wallpaper from the Chinese bedroom: ‘Life of the Chinese Emperor,’

Pagodenburg, 1718–1722, Nymphenburg Palace, near Munich.

In the same complex, another pavilion was built two years later, Badenburg, in which each of the four rooms was decorated with Chinese wallpapers (fig. 8-15, 8-16). In one of the series, we see the theme of “Life of the Chinese Emperor” in the bedroom, which was inspired by numerous travel accounts and Father Bouvet’s book.²⁰⁷

The Amalienburg was designed by French architect François Cuvillés in 1734, when Cuvillés had just completed the Ornate Rooms in the Residence. With the help of

²⁰⁷ Heinrich Kreisel, *Farbiges Nymphenburg*, München, F. Bruckmann, c1944, p. 52.

this experience he proceeded to create what is generally recognized as “the most beautiful little palace of the German Rococo.”²⁰⁸



Fig. 8-17 Kitchen, Amalienburg, 1734, Nymphenburg Palace, near Munich.

Decorated with Dutch tiles, the ceiling in the kitchen of Amalienburg is painted with Chinese scenes in blue-and-white. As figs. 8-17 and 8-18 show, the landscape paintings with Chinese architecture in perspective and figures in detail all indicate the extent to which famous architects and interior designers understood Chinese decorative motifs at this time.

²⁰⁸ Peter O. Kruckmann, *The Wittelsbach Palaces from Landshut and Hirschstadt to Munich*, Munich; New York : Prestel Verlag, 2001, p. 42.



Fig. 8-18 (detail of 8-17) Kitchen, Amalienburg, 1734, Nymphenburg Palace, near Munich.

The Nymphenburg Palace is by no means the only example of European palaces that were swept by the Chinese vogue. Nearby, in the Munich Residence, François Cuvillés designed another room which matches the beauty of porcelain perfectly.

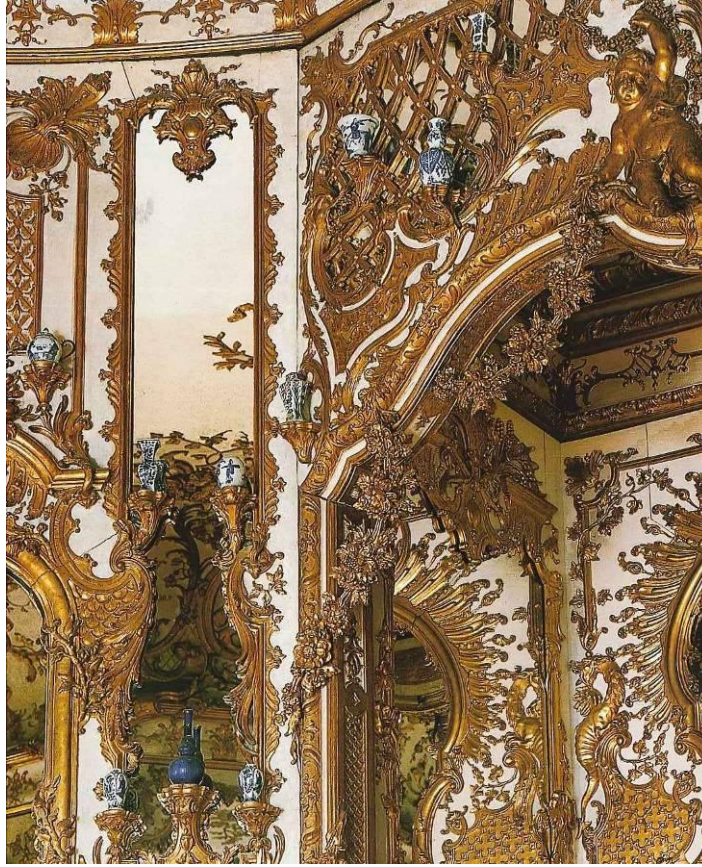


Fig. 8-19 Mirror Cabinet in the Ornaate Rooms of the Munich Residence, Munich, François Cuvilliés the Elder, 1731/1732.

Similar to that of the Amalienburg, Johann Baptist Zimmermann, who carried out the stuccowork in many of Cuvilliés' buildings, was responsible for the rocaille decorations here.²⁰⁹ Fig 8-19 illustrates how the stuccowork in its asymmetrical way was deigned meticulously to accentuate the lavishness of the porcelain. In addition, mirrors were placed framed in a variety of curvilinear forms to reflect and enhance the beauty of blue-and-white porcelains.

²⁰⁹ Peter O. Kruckmann, *The Wittelsbach Palaces from Landshut and Höschstädt to Munich*, Munich; New York : Prestel Verlag, 2001. p.26.

Germany's neighbor, Vienna, was certainly not immune to this vogue for Chinese design. It is recorded that on 12 January 1709, Prince Adam Franz Schwarzenberg wrote to Baron van Heems, asking the baron to render him service by "procuring a fine porcelain dessert service, as large and as beautiful as possible."²¹⁰ And according to scholar Claudia Lehner-Jabst, it is no coincidence that the Prince Eugene's Palace was adjacent to the porcelain manufactory of Du Paquier in Vienna:

Given their physical proximity, we are certainly justified in suspecting that the manufactory and the prince's summer palace were aware of each other's existence. Almost all contemporary descriptions of the manufactory consider it worth mentioning that the two were immediate neighbors. Completed in 1699, the prince's summer palace was – artistically, economically and socially – a building of the greatest possible significance for Rossau and its adjacent suburbs. A variety of buildings had grouped themselves around the palace, including not only workshops, houses of religious orders, churches, tenements and hostelries, but also the summer residences of other noble families.²¹¹

In this context, the "Dubsky Room" (named after its last owner, Count Dubsky) was created in the House of Liechtenstein:

This room is decorated with approximately 1,450 small porcelain panels fitted in the wood paneling, furniture, window surrounds and picture frames, over seventy vases,

²¹⁰ Family archive of the Schwarzenberg princes, Scholess Krumau, Faszikel FPh/7-598.

²¹¹ *Baroque Luxury Porcelain, The Manufactories of Du Paquier in Vienna and of Carlo Ginori in Florence*, edited by Johann Kraftner, Prestel, Munich, Berlin, London and New York, 2005, p. 15.

twenty-eight beakers, and six dishes or plates, twelve sconces, three chandeliers, a fireplace surround with mantelpiece, and console tops made of tiles. It was discovered at the beginning of the twentieth century in a palace in Brno in the Czech Republic, which had been acquired in 1724 by a princess of Lietchtenstein, a daughter of Prince Johann Adam Andres I, for the sum of 5,500 gulden.²¹²



Fig. 8-20 & 8-21 (detail of 8-21) Du Paquier Manufactory, 'Dubsky Room,' c. 1725, MAK- Österreichisches Museum Fur angewandte Kunst, Gegenwartskunst, Vienna.

As figs. 8-20 and 8-21 illustrate, the room was designed to display its large collections of porcelains produced in the Du Paquier Manufactory. To match the porcelain, the chandelier was made of the same material and closer attention reveals the source of its inspiration through the figures in Chinese costumes.

²¹² Leisching, Julius, 'Des Brunner Porzellanzimmer aus Dubskyschem Besitze,' in *Kunst und Kunsthandwerk*, vol. XVI, Vienna, 1913, p. 2.

In the state bedroom in Schloss, another palace of Prince Eugene, we see the evidence of China-mania again from the matching bedding set and the wall-hangings, which were said to “represent the apex of the fashion for things Chinese for Austria.”²¹³



Fig. 8-22 Wall hanging with a smoking Chinese man, Cotton chintzes, appliquéd embroidery, India, c. 1730, Schloss Hof. MAK- Österreichisches Museum Fur angewandte Kunst (Austrian Museum of Applied Arts), Gegenwartskunst, Vienna.

²¹³ Angela Volker, “An Indian Chinoiserie from an Austrian Palace,” *Baroque Luxury Procelain, The Manufactories of Du Paquier in Vienna and of Carlo Ginori in Florence*, edited by Johann Kraftner, Prestel, Munich, Berlin, London and New York, 2005, p. 53.

In fig. 8-22, one of the three wall-hangings, we see schematically rendered Chinese figures with costumes that are set in the center. Also the new taste for asymmetry is manifest here in some details. For example, the main figure lowers his head toward one direction while two servants are taking different positions.

What meaning did contemporary Europeans see in Chinese porcelain, artifacts and figures? Why would paintings, wallpapers and tapestries all adopt motifs to depict the Chinese way of living? To answer these questions we need to understand the literary context and philosophical influence that China had in contemporary Europe. As mentioned before in Chapters VI and VII, Chinese scholars such as Arcade Hoang and Shen Fu Chang traveled to Europe and made huge contributions to the European knowledge of China and Chinese aesthetics. In addition, Jesuits who went to China were regarded as “living letters” who helped to spread news and information as they went about their business on behalf of the Society. As Donald F. Lach points out, “The Jesuits were later to call their returnees from Asia ‘living letters.’ Throughout the century it was in part through such ‘living letters,’ both Jesuits and non-Jesuits, that the rest of Europe was to learn gradually, and sometimes reluctantly, about the opening of the East.”²¹⁴

As early as the 1540s, Jesuit missionaries in East Asia introduced the Chinese and Japanese to Christianity. As a result, these zealous Christians had learned Chinese, mastered the canon of classic Confucian texts, dressed as Mandarins, and joined the imperial court. Over the years, the Vatican became a great repository both of the works

²¹⁴ Donald F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, Vol. II, Book 2, The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., London, 1970, p. 6.

the Jesuits produced in Eastern languages and of texts and works of art that they sent back. By the middle of the seventeenth century, it is recorded that the famous Roman Jesuit Athanasius Kircher (1602 – 1680) tried to study Chinese in Rome and insisted that the Chinese tradition was as old and profound as that of the Egyptians.²¹⁵

It is worth considering further the career of Matteo Ricci. He was among the Jesuit missionaries who contributed most significantly to introducing Chinese culture in general and art and architecture in particular to sixteenth century Europe (fig. 8-23). He was the first Jesuit missionary to become adept in Chinese, and he produced a map of the world, on Western principles, in Chinese. The Ricci map went through several versions from 1574 to 1603 and profoundly influenced Western cartography.²¹⁶

²¹⁵ John Lust, *Western Books on China Published Up to 1850*, Bamboo Publishing Ltd, 1987, p.10.

²¹⁶ Refer to *Research on Matteo Ricci's World Map*, Shanghaigai Gu Ji Publication House, Shanghai, 2004, p. 32.



Fig. 8-23 Copper engraving, 17th century (The Bettmann Archive). Left, Matteo Ricci, S. J. (1552 – 1610) founder of the first Christian missions in China Right: Li Paul, Mandarin Colao, prominent convert and champion of the faith.

In addition to introducing Chinese civilization to Europe, Jesuit missionaries also spoke favorably of Chinese government and administration. The following extract gives a good impression of Matteo Ricci's favorable opinion of the Chinese administration:

It seems to be quite remarkable when we stop to consider it, that in a kingdom of almost limitless expanse and innumerable population, and abounding in copious supplies of every description, though they have a well-equipped army and navy that could easily conquer the neighborhood nations, neither the King nor his people ever think of waging a war of aggression...

Another remarkable fact and quite worthy of note as marking a difference from the West, is that the entire kingdom is administrated by the Order of the Learned,

commonly known as the Philosophers. The responsibility for orderly management of the entire realm is wholly and completely committed to their charge and care.²¹⁷

Furthermore, it was Matteo Ricci who first introduced Confucius to Europe. Of his journal covering the years 1583 – 1610, which he spent in China, it has been written: “It probably had more effect on the literary and scientific, the philosophical and the religious, phases of life in Europe than any other historical volume in the seventeenth century.”²¹⁸

In 1662, the Jesuits published in China a translation from the manuscript of Confucius, under the title *Sapientia Sinica*, which contained most of Confucius’ works; an additional volume, also incorporating Confucius’ biography, was published in 1687 with the title *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* (Confucius, the philosopher of the Chinese) and dedicated to Louis XIV. Soon after its introduction, Confucianism was embraced by many European philosophers of the Enlightenment as an alternative to Christianity. As Rudolf Wittkower points out:

The first symptom of this development was Leibniz’s *Novissima Sinica* of 1697, a work in which the great philosopher advocated a universal religion derived from the natural theology of Confucianism.

²¹⁷ *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci: 1583 – 1610*, translated by Louis J. Gallagher, S. J., Random House, Inc. New York, 1942.

²¹⁸ L. J. Gallagher, S.J., tr., *China in the Sixteenth Century* (New York, 1953), p. xix.

In the period from 1669 to the end of the century, the movement began which is of central interest in the present study, namely, urging the European to study and imitate the Chinese government and institutions. The greatest name involved is that of Leibniz.²¹⁹

Because of Leibniz's eminence, the *Novissima Sinica* attracted widespread attention and was very influential. In his preface, Leibniz wrote a eulogy for Chinese philosophy and laws:

But who would believe that there is on earth a people who, though we are in our view so very advanced in every branch of behavior, still surpass us in comprehending the precepts of civil life? Yet now we find this to be so among the Chinese, as we learn to know them better. And so if we are their equals in the industrial arts, and ahead of them in contemplative sciences, certainly they surpass us in practical philosophy, that is, in the precepts of ethics and politics adapted to the present life and use of mortals. Indeed, it is difficult to describe how beautifully all the laws of the Chinese, in contrast to those of other peoples, are directed to the achievement of public tranquility and the establishment of social order, so that men shall be disrupted in their relations as little as possible...²²⁰

Leibniz's statement later influenced some important European thinkers such as Quesnay and Voltaire in eighteenth-century France. The influence of China upon

²¹⁹ Rudolf Wittkower, *The Impact of Non-European Civilizations on the Art of the West*, Cambridge Press, Cambridge and New York, 1989, pp. 159-160.

²²⁰ Donald F. Lach, *The Preface to Leibniz's Novissima Sinica*, University of Hawaii Press, 1957, pp. 69-70.

Europe soon extended from economics and politics to art and architecture, which partially accounted for the popularity of depictions of Chinese figures and Chinese emperors, especially in European royal palaces.

Led by Matteo Ricci and Adam Schall von Bell, the Jesuits performed an incredible task of translation and interpretation. Other Jesuits, like Alessandro Valignano (1539 – 1606) and Michele Ruggieri (1543 – 1607), believed that the most efficient way of converting the Chinese to Christianity was to adapt Chinese values and beliefs to their message.²²¹ Upon their return, the Jesuits recounted their first-hand knowledge of almost all aspects of Chinese civilization and these observations were widely disseminated and had great influence in Europe. The Vatican library preserves remarkable material evidence of this cultural exchange.²²² To build Rome as the center of research on the Orient in general and China in particular, numerous missionaries brought many paintings from China.

²²¹ For further reference, see *Encounters: The Meeting of Asia and Europe 1500 – 1800*, V&A Publications, edited by Anna Jackson and Amin Jaffer, London, 2004.

²²² Ibid.

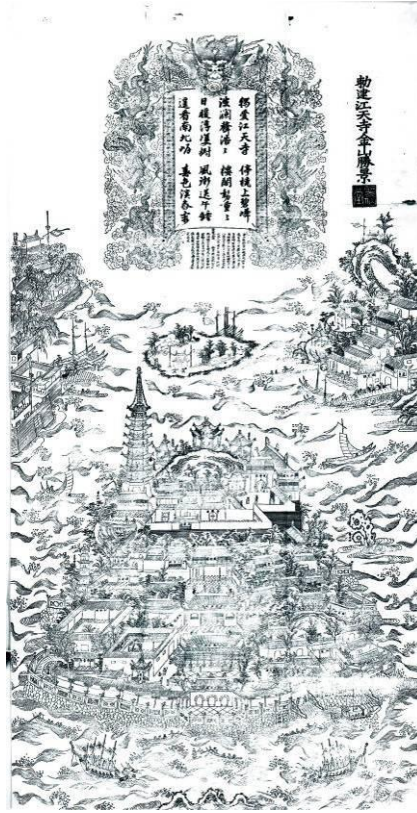


Fig. 8-24 Engraving, Chinese, Vatican Library, Rome, Barberini Library archive, the sixteenth century.

Fig. 8-24 presents an example of the depiction of architecture from among those that were brought to Europe from China in the sixteenth century. This representation of a complex of Chinese temple buildings and a pagoda is taken from a book that was originally in the Barberini Library, and dates from the sixteenth century. The picture contains some typical characteristics of Chinese painting, such as a linear mode of representation, employment of the decorative motifs of dragon and phoenix, a somewhat strange formation of stones (from a European perspective) and a detailed depiction of a Chinese pagoda.

Besides those in the Vatican library, detailed descriptions and illustrations of Chinese art and architecture began to be collected in other parts in Europe as well. In Matteo Ricci's diary, for example, we find detailed descriptions of Chinese buildings:

When they set about buildings, they seem to gauge things by the span of human life, building for themselves rather than for posterity... they themselves do not dig into the ground to build up foundations but merely place large stones on an unbroken surface of the ground; or if they do dig foundations, these do not go deeper than a yard or two even though the walls or towers are to be built up to a great height.... We have stated already, as one will recall, that most of their buildings are constructed of wood, or if made in masonry they are covered in by roofs supported on wooden columns. The advantage of this latter method of construction is that the walls can be renovated at any time, while the rest of the building remains intact, since the roof is supported by the columns and is not carried by the walls.²²³

Moreover, in some late sixteenth-century accounts, a new interpretation of China was established by a variety of writers who praised the governmental institutions, the beauty and comfort of the houses, the excellence of the roads and bridges, the natural disinclination of the Chinese to wage war, and their religious tolerance. According to the Cordier's bibliography, in Europe there were up to 196 books published on China in the sixteenth century and 630 in the seventeenth century. Among these books, many were translations of the Chinese classics by seventeenth-century missionaries.

²²³ *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci: 1583 – 1610*, translated by Louis J. Gallagher, S. J. Random House Inc., New York, 1942, pp. 19 – 20.

In Austria, the influence of another famous Dutch ambassador – Nieuhoff - is shown in the great Austrian Architect Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach's book on historical architecture (1721). The fact that von Erlach devotes a whole chapter to East Asia shows how important a part the Far East played in the interests of the educated classes. It is also worth mentioning that details from Nieuhoff's engravings were borrowed almost identically (the pagoda of Nanking, for instance) by von Erlach for his illustrations (fig. 8-25 shows an example in which the Chinese buildings and pagodas were set as the background).



Fig. 8-25 Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (1656 – 1723), *Enteuff einer Historischen Architektur*, 1725, 3rd book, plate X, Sammlungen des Fürsten von und zu Liechtenstein, Vaduz-Vienna, Library, Inv. No. 9097.

Along with the commercial and religious connections between China and Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, large quantities of Chinese artifacts were disseminated in European families. For both aesthetic and symbolic values, Chinese porcelain became “the ambassador’s gift” during the seventeenth and

eighteenth centuries, which in turn gave rise to a large number of “Chinese rooms” decorated in European palaces with a variety of design styles. All of them shared one commonality – to provide a space with appropriate interior design so that the collections of porcelain could be displayed in the most fashionable and attractive manner possible. As discussed above, many rooms are designed with windows to bask the collections with light and with niches hung with splendid mirrors, reflecting the light and color of the porcelains. Some of them employed wallpapers while others preferred lacquer paneled walls, usually decorated with Chinese inspired bird-and-flower motifs, along with Chinese figures in traditional costumes.

Closer examination of these Chinese rooms reveals some distinguishing characteristics – the light and soft colors employed in the interior design, the stucco works in curvaceous forms as well as a delicacy and refinement that match the Chinese porcelain and lacquer ware. All this serves as a precursor of the Rococo style to come.

CHAPTER IX: CONCLUSION

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.

John Donne (1572 – 1631)

山雨欲来风满楼 - The wind sweeping through the tower heralds a rising storm in the mountain.

Xu Jun, Tang Dynasty (618 – 907)



Fig. 9-1 Liu Yu (1410-1472), *Xia Yun Yu Yu Tu* (Painting of summer clouds preceding the rain), Ming Dynasty, Beijing Palace Museum, Beijing.

There are fundamental differences between Oriental Chinese and Western European art. While European painters have tended to focus on representations of human reality either in classical repose or in dramatic events and moments, Chinese artists have preferred to indulge themselves in bird-and-flower and landscape paintings, in which everything is depicted as if aloft from a bird's-eye view. Fig. 9-1 shows a Chinese landscape painting from the Ming Dynasty (1369-1644), capturing a time when the clouds are gathering, forecasting the coming rain. Similar to the poem written by Xu Jun, the wind sweeping through the building before the storm gives a sign of what is coming. Just as the English saying goes, coming events cast their shadows before what is coming.

This dissertation is about such 'becoming.' It goes back earlier than the time before the Rococo, when light-heartedness took over in European decorative arts and interior design in the eighteenth century, before the phrase 'Anglo-Chinoise garden' was fabricated and even before the term 'Chinoiserie' was created, to ask what gradual changes were taking place to give rise to these significant revolutions.

This dissertation is also about 'interconnections' - interconnections between people of all classes, princely gifts and travelers as well as Jesuits, and, finally, between continents in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The routes between Europe and China were established before the Christian era and continued during the Byzantine period. Subsequently the meetings of Mongols and the Crusades brought the two continents face to face in the Yuan Dynasty (see Chapter III). Thus, from the thirteenth century onwards, the European imagination of China was fired by the accounts of diplomats and travelers who had actually visited Chinese courts

and cities. In this way, a variety of luxury goods such as silk and porcelain traveled from China to Europe and were much prized by European elites. Yet the great distance between the two continents still separated the two civilizations and kept China mainly as a fantasyland in the European mind. This view began to change at the end of the fifteenth century. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, establishment of the sea route to Asia, culminating in glimpses of this wonderland, revealed to Europe a new horizon. As a result, the scope of European intellectual understanding of China widened enormously, with the ever-increasing exchanges between China and Europe. To find the significance of this change of view and its consequences, we need to go back to the end of the fifteenth century, the dawn of the epoch of the great geographical discoveries by sea, and the establishment of direct trade between the continents.

9.1 Trading between Europe and China

As a result of the commercial exchanges discussed in Chapter IV and V, Chinese artifacts were exported on a vast scale to Europe throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Among those artifacts, blue-and-white porcelain began to replace Chinese silk during this period as the most highly sought after commodity. Inventories in Portugal made at the time show that the Portuguese king bought Chinese porcelains and ceramics as well as jewels, fabrics and other artifacts. The monarch gave away

many of the pieces he received, and a letter of release dated 1512 refers to a dozen pieces of Chinese porcelain given by the king to the Jeronimous Monastery in Belem.²²⁴

Although the handsome returns enabled Portugal to maintain its monopoly over Chinese trade in the sixteenth century, by the end of the century it was apparent that Portugal ultimately lacked the resources to adequately equip, finance and police its far-flung empire and trade network (see the discussion in Chapter IV). Thus, from the early seventeenth century, the power of Portuguese traders in China waned and the influence of Dutch merchants increased (see Chapter V); at the same time the English East India Company entered the trading business with China. Other European powers such as the French, Swedes and Danes also attempted to enter the trading market, although on a much smaller scale. The porcelain trade between China and Europe contributed to changes in the decorative tiles that were produced and used in many European palaces ranging from Marquis de Fronteira Palace in Lisbon to Rambouillet Palace in France (See Chapter IV, V, VI, and VII).

9.2 Missionaries and Mandarins

Other than the commercial links between Europe and China, religious exchange between the two powers also had great influence. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Rome not only collected books from many foreign cultures; it also became the center of missionary enterprises that spanned the world (see Chapter II).

²²⁴ Mary Salgado Lobo Antunes, *The Porcelain Route, Ming and Qing Dynasties*, Oriental Foundation, Lisbon, 1999, p. 17.

The various accounts of China and the exported goods with detailed illustrations of Chinese landscape architecture, which spread widely in Europe throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, presented Europeans with a view of a country with advanced administration systems, beautiful gardens and luxury goods. Specific countries in Europe responded differently to this image of China, and even within the same country, different reactions were witnessed at different times, bound to individual contemporary circumstances. The different social and economical forces in each country partially account for the extent to which assimilation of Chinese forms of thought differed, and the specific reactions are examined in detail in the above chapters (see Chapter IV, V, VI, and VII).

Although it is now common knowledge that there was a Chinese vogue in eighteenth century Europe, scholars have opposing opinions about the extent to which this vogue affected European art and architecture. Authorities such as Rudolf Wittkower argue that this trend gave rise to the genesis of the Rococo style, whereas others such as Fiske Kimball deny any relationship between the two. In general, the discussion of Chinese influence in contemporary scholarship focuses mainly on second and third quarters of the eighteenth century when the Rococo style flourished in Europe and when William Chambers built his famous Chinese pagoda in Kew Gardens. But this scholarship fails to address the presence of many Chinese artifacts in Europe much earlier than this date, or to consider the possibility that they played a part in changing the aesthetic taste of Europe. Furthermore, although there is an emerging trend to acknowledge more Chinese influence on European art, the domain of architecture is still left unaddressed.

The intention of this dissertation was to go back earlier than this period in the eighteenth century in order to gain a better understanding of the time when the interests and appreciation for Chinese art and architecture in Europe were evolving in embryo, which would later take the form of erecting ‘Chinese pavilions’ in European gardens and ‘Porcelain rooms’ in European palaces. It was in creating the latter forms that Chinese art and architecture exerted their most significant influence on European paintings, artifacts and interior design. In other words, this dissertation aimed at exploring the genesis of this Chinese vogue in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, collecting the evidence that influences had begun to operate a century earlier and creating more abundant references to the manifestation of the coming tide which swept Europe in the eighteenth century. The course of manifestation of this influence during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is important because unlike the communications that had been on and off between Europe and China ever since the Roman era, this time the knowledge and appreciation for things Chinese helped not only enrich but also to re-establish the aesthetic values of European art and architecture.

In the process of using, appreciating and imitating exported Chinese artifacts, Europe admitted and integrated the vocabulary of a host of Chinese names, decorative themes and motifs (See Chapter V). This accumulation of acceptance and deeper understanding of Chinese art and architecture later led to more ‘Chinese buildings’ or ‘Chinese rooms’ being constructed in eighteenth-century Europe. Many examples in painting and wallpapers listed in these five chapters prepared people gradually for the attempt to recreate ‘real’ Chinese rooms in the European palaces or Chinese buildings in gardens that flourished in eighteenth century Europe. For example, after its silhouette

appeared in Nieuhoff's *Travels*, the Nanking Pagoda was woven in the Beauvais tapestry, and incorporated into the names and decorative panels of many of the 'Chinese Rooms' in European palaces; finally the attempt was made to recreate the real building by William Chambers in Kew Gardens (see Chapter V). But from the sixteenth century onwards, there were other images of Chinese architecture and gardens depicted on the Chinese porcelains imported into Europe (see Chapter IV and V). Moreover, a number of accurate descriptions of Chinese towers and buildings and of some of its aesthetic ideologies were available in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe (see Chapter V).

Based on both literal and visual evidence, this thesis suggests (see Chapter VI and VII) that China during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries helped shape the life and mind of Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and examines how the increasing knowledge of Chinese art contributed to broadening contemporary European art and architecture, especially its repertoire of ornament, decorative design and interior design.

Eventually, the increasingly available publications about China, together with imported Chinese artifacts and paintings, made it possible for Europe to pursue not only a new set of aesthetic values but also a new way of living. As Wittkower points out:

Now the West began to look to China for a new synthesis, in which even the old names got mixed up. But in fact history did not repeat itself, for in contrast to the Renaissance position the new trend was anti-Christian and far removed from Neoplatonic mysticism... Thus, this Sinophilia took on extraordinary proportions and far-reaching implications. One is inclined to conclude that, by re-creating China (or pseudo-China)

in art and architecture, as well as in nature, people endeavored to establish the physical conditions for a Chinese way of life.²²⁵

It is also noteworthy that besides their influence on European art and architecture, the ideologies went much deeper, as is evidenced by the famous philosopher Leibniz vehemently advocating a Chinese way of governing, that is, governing by nature.

This dissertation has made an attempt to explore the ways in which the interchanges of the two civilizations in Europe and China began to transplant Chinese thoughts and aesthetic values to European soil. In particular it has concentrated on the transfer of these new ideas from where they flourished to produce new fruit, which has had a lasting influence until now.

As an old Chinese saying goes: “Learning about the past can teach us the future.” I hope this dissertation may help to bring more attention to a fascinating time which foreshadowed what is happening now in our current era and what may happen in the near future.

²²⁵ Rudolf Wittkower, *The Impact of Non-European Civilizations on the Art of the West*, Cambridge Press, Cambridge and New York, 1989, pp. 159-160.

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